

## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 16 – Mad Rush

They had all of their survival supplies from California, Gary had seen to that. However, those supplies were not geared to having Gary's four kids, grandchildren and the ranch hands and their families. Gary got on the phone the next morning and ordered the propane tanks topped off and 2 more 40,000-gallon diesel tanks installed. He offered a premium for immediate installation, plumbing and filling. Then, he called a grocery wholesaler. He ordered two semi loads of food, again offering a premium for immediate delivery. Gary, Ron and Clarence did the grocery shopping for everyone on the ranch as an excuse to get out. Gary knew exactly what everyone ate and it was a snap to order the right things. There was a walk-in freezer in the second shelter, so Gary ordered 8 sides of beef and several cases of pork primal cuts and chickens cut and wrapped.

Immediate turned out to be a week in the case of the propane tanks, but the grocery wholesaler made his delivery in 3 days. You should have seen the look on the drivers' faces when Gary started counting out those hundred dollar bills. Gary made sure to get a receipt in case the drivers didn't make it back to the warehouse with all that cash. He called Springfield and ordered 8 Super Match rifles, and told them he needed them in a big hurry. Like in 'I'll pay double to get them right now, we're sort of in a hurry'. They said they would ship them on a company plane to a dealer in Flagstaff, throw in 160 20 round magazines and a scope of his choice. All they had in stock were 8 SA9805 Super Match, McMillan Marine Corps camo fiberglass, Douglas stainless steel barrels at \$3,149 each, but they had lots of scopes. Gary went with the 6-20x50 Mil Dot BDC Government Model and asked if he could buy more at cost. They said yes and he ordered 60 extra at \$400.

According to their website, "The variable power 6-20x50 scope has a patented mil dot reticle with unlimited range finding capability and bullet-drop compensation, with calibrated rings for 7.62mm and 5.56mm, as well as a blank ring you can calibrate for any caliber yourself. The 30mm tube with external target knobs has adjustable side focus, patented internal bubble level, flip-up lens covers and proprietary multi-coated lenses. It is 100% waterproof, fog proof, and has a nitrogen filled spare battery compartment. It has .50 caliber shockproof-guarantee. It has eleven individual brightness settings for rapid target acquisition even in extreme, near dark conditions. Lifetime warranty."

They had 6 M-40's, 6 M-24SWS, Gary's 3 M1A's, Ron's Super Match plus Clarence's FAL. That gave them a total of 25 7.62x51 caliber rifles. There were the 5 M107s, 2 TAC-50s, 4 M-24 SWS, 48 M16A3/203's, 48 MP5/10SD6 submachine guns, the 6 Thumpers, 48 10mm S & W 1026 pistols, and an assortment of other firearms. Oh, they had both M-2's and both Mk-19's too and all of the ammo. Don't forget the Claymores and the Interceptor body armor. Let them commie SOB's come.

Raymond 'Ray' Benton was on his way to visit the Grand Canyon when he heard the President's speech on his pickup radio. He drove the rest of the way to the Grand Canyon and got a motel room. Ray, as you may recall, had two rifles in his collection that were his pride and joy. The first was a Springfield Armory M1A, M-21, tactical rifle. The

second was a Remington 700, M-24 SWS. He wouldn't have minded having a .50 caliber, but they were way too pricey. The Army had made him switch to the M-9 Beretta and he didn't like it. He carried the M1911A1 for too many years and the lightweight M-9 just didn't feel right in his hand. And, the cartridge stunk. He'd taught himself to double and triple tap when he fired, to ensure he brought down the target. He had one of the weapons, another 'lost soldier' and lots of magazines for it, but he still preferred the .45.

Ray had thought about moving to Wyoming, but had never gotten around to it. He had his retirement check directly deposited into his Wells Fargo checking account and just bounced around, living on the cheap and saving his money. He sure wanted a Barrett like his pal Scott had, but refused to spend the money. Now, here he was in the community of Grand Canyon and things didn't sound too good. He hung around for a few days and learned of a reclusive group of folks south a ways on the Coconino Plateau. Some folks said it was a retirement community and a couple said that they were just a bunch of crackpot survivalists. Somewhere along the way, Ray had picked up a mutt, too. That dog purely loved him and he was beginning to love her.

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Ray stopped at the gate and honked his horn. These guys must be survivalists, he thought, the place looked more like an Army post than a retirement community. Three old men came riding up on horses. Well, maybe it was a retirement community; they looked to be around 70 years old. The three old men dismounted, tired their horses to the fence and one of them unlocked the gate.

"My name is Gary Olsen," Gary said, "What can I do for you?"

"Hello Mr. Olsen," Ray said, "My name is Ray Benton. I heard about you folks up in Grand Canyon and decided to look you up."

"We don't have any work, if you're looking for work," Gary said.

"I'm not, Mr. Olsen," Ray assured Gary, "But the news doesn't sound good and some of the folks up in Grand Canyon expressed the idea that this might be a survivalist community."

"Do we look like a bunch of survivalists to you Ray?" Gary asked.

"I don't know; what does a survivalist look like?" Ray asked and immediately regretted.

"Butthead, huh?" Gary said, "Well, let me open the gate and you can come in for lunch. We know about buttheads around here, don't we guys."

"You and Clarence are the only buttheads I know," Ron said, "Me, I'm just a man of good humor."

Ray followed them back to the housing area. Looked like a small community with several triplewide and several doublewide mobile homes. Or, did they call them manufactured housing these days?

“Can you ride a horse Ray?” Gary asked.

“I suppose I could manage, why?” Ray replied.

“Grab one of those pintos and toss a saddle on it and we’ll give you the grand tour,” Gary said.

Ray grabbed a rope, tossed it around a pinto’s neck, led it to the barn and saddled it. He mounted up and joined the guys.

“The short fat guy who looks like me but is uglier is Ron Green,” Gary said. “The other guy is Clarence Rawlings.”

“Nice to meet you guys,” Ray said.

“Short haircut,” Gary observed, “Are you ex-military?”

“Retired Army Sergeant Major,” Ray replied. “Did my tours in Nam and ended up a supply Sergeant at Ft. Campbell.”

“You a shooting man Ray?” Gary asked, “Most soldiers are.”

“My hobbies are gun collecting, hunting and camping,” Ray replied.

“So you have a couple of weapons, huh?” Gary said.

“A few yes,” Ray replied non-committedly.

“We have a couple ourselves,” Gary said, “Besides these Colts and Winchesters. The property is 9 sections. I built a lake over there and we stocked it with fish. Got us a barn, a one room schoolhouse and a large garage.”

“I don’t see any power lines, you use kerosene lamps?” Ray inquired.

“Generators, Ray,” Ron responded, “And propane for heat and cooking and the like.”

“I didn’t see any tanks guys, I just presumed...” Ray started to say.

“There’s a lot more here than meets the eye Ray,” Gary said.

They tossed hamburgers and hot dogs on the grill and invited everyone for lunch. Ray noticed a redheaded woman and thought she was something to behold. He asked Clar-

ence her name and the name of the guy that seemed to be pestering her. The woman, Clarence said, was Stacy Marie Williams née Benton and was a widow and their school teacher. The guy pestering her was Damon Olsen, Gary's son. Clarence suggested that Ray introduce himself, she'd probably be grateful. She wasn't interested in Damon but he just didn't seem to get the message. Well, why not, Ray was more than willing to rescue a damsel in distress.

"Hi," Ray said, "I'm Ray Benton and Clarence said your name was Stacy."

"You look like an Army man with that haircut," Stacy said, rising to take Ray's offered hand. "I'll talk to you later Damon," she said dismissing him.

"Retired," Ray said, "Thirty years in the Army."

"My late husband was in the Army," Stacy said, "Got killed in Desert Storm."

"I'm sorry Stacy," Ray said, "its always hard on the families. Maybe that's why I never got married."

"What brings you here Ray?" Stacy asked, "We're sort of off of the beaten path."

"I was on my way to the Grand Canyon and heard the president's speech," Ray replied. "Got a motel room and hung around for a while. Then I heard about this place. Some folks said it was a retirement community and some said it was a bunch of survivalist nuts."

"I don't know that they're nuts Ray," Stacy responded, "But they're pretty well prepared for a bunch of old guys. That Gary seems to have a lot of money and he's not shy about spending it on preparations. They just put in two additional propane tanks over there. You can see where the sod is disturbed."

"You're a school teacher, huh?" Ray asked.

"I was a clerk in a grocery store, but went to night school and got my degree," Stacy explained. "I heard about this job and it paid pretty well, so I moved to Arizona."

"From where?" Ray asked, "If I'm not being to nosey."

"Jackson, Wyoming," Stacy replied.

"Really? I thought a lot about moving to Jackson Hole Valley, but just never got around to it," Ray said.

"I'm really glad you didn't Ray," Stacy said softly.

"Any children?" Ray asked.

“One. Ryan is 25, Ray,” Stacy replied, “He was supposed to get an appointment to West Point, but it fell through. So, he did the next best thing and joined ROTC in college. He’s on active duty now with the Army.”

“Gee, I hope he doesn’t get caught up in this North Korea thing,” Ray said.

“I suppose that depends on how long it lasts and a lot of other things,” Stacy replied. “Right now, he’s in jump school. After that, he’s going to go through Ranger training.”

“Already do his IOBC?” Ray asked.

“Yes,” Stacy said, “They sure get a lot of training don’t they?”

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“Excuse me for interrupting,” Gary said, “Where are you planning on spending the night?”

“I didn’t really have any plans one way or the other Gary,” Ray replied.

“We have some empty Airstreams,” Gary said, “Why don’t you put up in one of them for a couple of nights. We might have something we’d like to talk to you about.”

“Well, sure, if it’s no trouble,” Ray said. “What about my dog? Will she have to stay outside?”

“Take the far trailer,” Gary said, “I have a dog and she lived in it with us for months while we were on our road trips.”

“This place seems secure enough, but I have some firearms in my camper shell,” Ray said, “Is it okay to leave them there or should they be put up somewhere?”

“Actually it’s up to you Ray,” Gary said, “We have an armory if you’d prefer to put them in it, but it doesn’t matter.”

“An armory?” Ray asked. “Well, maybe I should put them in there. You might be surprised at some of the weapons I have, though. That won’t be a problem will it?”

“You might be a little surprised yourself, Ray,” Gary laughed. “Tell you what, I won’t wet my pants if you won’t.”

“Ok, Gary,” Ray responded, “But be forewarned, I have a M16A2.”

Gary just laughed and shook his head. The three of them helped Ray take his guns to the armory. Ray’s jaw was practically on the floor from the time they opened the door to

the stairs leading to the shelter. When they opened the Armory and he saw their little gun collection, he almost wet his pants despite their agreement. They were better equipped than an infantry platoon, maybe two. And their M16A3's were suppressed and had M203's installed. The only thing he had that they didn't was the M-21. He put his 'pitiful' weapons collection in a rack and just plain stared at the Barrett rifle.

"You like that one Ray?" Gary asked.

"Who wouldn't?" Ray said, "My friend Scott has one, but not as tricked out as yours."

## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 17 – The Numbers Game

According to the CIA Fact book, China covers 9,326,410 square kilometers and had an estimated population in 2004 of 1,298,847,624. The United States was slightly larger, covering 9,631,418 square kilometers and had an estimated population in 2004 of 293,027,571. Why is that important? Well, thermonuclear war is a numbers game. Remember, those figures date back 6 years to around 2004. The Julang 2 missile was successfully tested by the PLA Navy in Jan. 2001 and a successful test of the undersea launch system was conducted in October 2001. This system is planned for installation on the Type 94 SLBM submarine currently under construction at Huludao. Each PLA Navy “boomer” is designed to carry 16 JL-2 missiles in a sail like configuration similar to Russian designed Delta class boats. The first JL-2 armed Type 94 is expected to be operational in 2002. The Chinese DF-31 is a road mobile, nuclear tipped SCUD like missile, which is nearly impossible to find, much less destroy. It is intended to counter the USAF B-2 bomber in a “limited” nuclear war scenario where China and the US would only kill a few million people on each side. If deployed in large numbers, the DF-31 could pose a significant first strike threat against stationary military targets inside the US homeland, such as the MX missile fields and the single B-2 bomber base.

What had China done in the past 6 years? How many of those submarines had they built and deployed? How many of the DF-31 and those DF-5 missiles did they have? But wait, are you really, really sure? Nikita blinked; that’s why JFK got away with his threat. Would the Chinese leaders blink too? In a pig’s eye! The Chinese carefully calculated their potential losses. Any way you calculated it, they would end up with a lot more people than the US. It was the numbers game, folks, just the numbers game.

Thanksgiving Day 2010...

The three men had talked it over and had decided to invite Ray to move to the ranch. Ray had a sizable 401k account and he was thinking about cashing it out and buying a home. Stacy told him that he might want to cash out the account, but that he should hang on to the money. He had taken her advice and Promise and he stayed in the Airstream. Ryan was ‘home’ on leave between Jump School and Ranger school. He only had 4 days, including travel time, but he wanted to see his Mom and meet this new boyfriend of hers. Ron and Linda decided to make it a super Thanksgiving and had Brenda, Jennifer, Paula, Kevin and John out to the ranch for the holiday. Mutt had let Gary pay for tickets for Britney, Aaron and Erik to visit their Dad. That turkey never got cooked.

At precisely 9am PST, the Chinese boats launched their missiles, as did the mainland Chinese forces. NORAD barely had time to issue a warning and for Edwards to use the football before the first missiles struck. The cities along the coasts were the first to be hit. The missiles launched against Cheyenne Mountain took longer to get there, but, when they hit, the mountain fell. As far as the US military was concerned, it was moot. They’d launched everything they had at China and had sent the ELF messages to the boomers. In 6 hours, unless the boomers received a recall message, they would launch their missiles too. But, in order to send a recall message, there had to be someone alive

to send it, right? And, he or she had to want to stop the missile launches.

Missy had jumped on the bed and awakened Gary. He got up to go to the bathroom and padded to his little office for a smoke. His new computer had a card that let him connect to the satellite TV receiver and watch whatever channel the receiver was tuned to. In this case, it happened to be CNN. The sun was up and Gary looked at the clock. 10:02am MST. He stubbed out the cigarette and was thinking about going back to bed when the EAS logo appeared on his computer screen. He sure didn't need any coffee to wake up this morning.

*"CNN has received word that the US is under missile attack from..."* and the screen went blank. Missile attack? As in inter-continental ballistic missiles? Thermo nuclear ICBM's?

"Sharon get dressed and head to the shelter," Gary yelled.

"I was just putting the turkey in the oven," Sharon protested.

"Use the oven in the shelter," Gary yelled, "The US is under missile attack."

Gary slipped on his clothes, grabbed his Winchester, Ruger and hat and coat and went from door to door to warn everyone. Everyone was already headed to the bomb shelter aka storm cellar aka root cellar and he went back and grabbed Sassy, Taffy and put Missy on a leash. He went to the shelter, as fast as his two legs would carry him, closing doors behind him. Gary flopped down in a chair to catch his breath. Most of the women were trying to keep a stiff upper lip, but their tears gave them away.

"Everybody get in ok?" Gary asked.

"You were the last one Gar-Bear," Ron said.

"Who attacked the US?" Gary asked.

"Has to be Russia or China," Ray suggested, "They're the only countries with a major nuclear capability."

"My money's on China Dad," Derek said, "Edwards as much as dared them over Korea."

"You were in Korea for 13 months, Derek," Gary recalled, "What do you think is going on over there?"

"South Korea is toast," Derek replied.

"Hmm, anything on TV?" Gary asked.



“Deader than a mackerel,” Ron said.

“Well someone dig out the Geiger counter and keep an eye on the radiation level,” Gary suggested.

“What about the radios, Gary?” Clarence asked.

“Assuming those were nuclear ICBM’s, we won’t hear anything for a minimum of 343 hours,” Gary said.

“He’s right Clarence,” Ray added, “If there is a lot of radiation around, it will take about 2 weeks to die down.”

“I need a drink,” Ron said.

“There’s all that bourbon we bought in Kentucky and never drank,” Gary said, “How about it Clarence, let’s get drunk. That will make our problems go away until tomorrow when our wives kill us.”

“Never mind,” Ron said.

“I thought so butthead,” Gary said loud enough for everyone to hear. “I’ll get you an iced tea and some sweet and low, partner.”

“My friend Scott and his wife Susan were on the way,” Ray said, “I sure hope they’re ok.”

“When were they supposed to get here?” Gary asked.

“Around noon,” Ray said. “That would put them around Flagstaff.”

“Your buddy Scott,” Gary asked, “Is he usually prepared for trouble?”

“He was bringing his guns so we could go shooting,” Ray answered, “And he has BOB’s in the car.”

“Is he usually early, on-time or late?” Gary continued.

“Early,” Ray said, “He’s a retired Air Force Chief Master Sergeant, by the way.”

“He’s probably already on 64 or 180,” Gary said. “What’s the radiation level like?”

“Normal so far,” Damon piped up.

“Ok. Ray, drive your truck up to the highway and I’ll follow you. I assume he knows that old Ford truck of yours, right?” Gary asked, not waiting for an answer. “Park your truck

so he'll know which road to take and I'll follow and bring you back."

Ray drove the Ford to the highway and parked it just off the road. Gary followed and drove him back to the shelter. If Scott and his wife weren't too 'hot' the shower in front of the door would wash off enough radiation so they could enter the shelter. Otherwise Gary wasn't sure what they would do. He left his older, spare, CD V-700 Geiger Counter sitting by the door right under the intercom. All he could do was hope that this Scott guy would get the message.

The turkey was starting to smell good and Gary suddenly realized he hadn't taken his meds or eaten any breakfast. Time flies when you're having fun. He excused himself, made up a pill caddy from the drug supplies and opened a fresh bottle of insulin. He took his shot and pills and went searching for something to eat. Sharon had made Monkey bread so he put some of it on a paper plate with some butter, refilled his coffee cup and grabbed a fork.

He had a Diamond D130J mounted on a mast for his receivers, and despite what he'd said earlier, decided to see if anyone was on the radio. He turned on his Yaesu VR-5000 scanning receiver, switched the antenna to that radio and waited for it to pick up a signal. Eventually, he heard part of a conversation, but the interference was pretty bad. All he made out was 'China' and 'entire country'. Great, entire which country? Or, did it really matter?

"Hello," the intercom announced. "This is Scott. Am I in the right place?"

Gary looked at Damon. Damon looked at the Geiger counter and said, "Nada."

"Scott who?" Gary asked over the intercom.

"I'm Ray's friend from Denver," Scott replied, giving very little away. "And, we're not hot."

Gary opened the door. "Get in here then if you have your weapons. Otherwise, let's go get them."

"Got them," Scott replied, "This is my wife Susan. Ray here?"

"Right over here you reprobate," Ray said.

Scott, Susan and Ray went to a corner of the dining/recreation room to visit. Stacy walked up and asked if Ray would introduce her to his friends. Ray rose, made the introduction and she joined them.

"New girlfriend Ray?" Scott asked.

"Stacy is the school teacher here at the ranch," Ray explained. "She has a son, Ryan

who is here on a short leave between Jump School and Ranger School. Actually, we just met a few weeks ago. Although, I suspect that Ryan will be staying until he can get orders.”

“What about all of these others folks?” Scott asked.

“Gary, Ron and Clarence are the seniors floating around,” Ray explained. “You met Gary. Ron is his size, but a little heavier. Clarence is the tall, slim black fellow over there. As luck would have it, all of Gary’s kid’s live here on the ranch. Damon, Gary’s oldest boy, has his kids visiting. All 5 of Ron and Linda’s kids and grandchildren turned up for Thanksgiving, too. The four Indian looking guys are the ranch hands, all with the last name Parker. They’re Comanche, and Gary calls them the cousins, although I don’t believe they’re related by blood.”

“It turns out these guys are sort of survivalists. I finally remembered where I heard Gary’s name, too,” Ray continued, “I’m pretty sure he’s the guy who caught Wes Clark when he took over the country back in 2005. Apparently the three are from Palmdale, California and had an outfit called the Palmdale Militia. Anyway Gary is some sort of a fanatic when it comes to preparedness. There are two identical 10,000 square foot shelters, one just for supplies. They have 4 generators, radio equipment, enough food for a small army and an armory that would equip at least a couple of platoons. Man they even have Ma Deuces, Mk-19’s and 4 ring mount equipped hummers and some 5-ton trucks. They have more automatic weapons, suppressors and MP5/10SD6’s than you can shake a stick at.”

“I didn’t recognize the names,” Scott said, “But are these the guys who Bush gave the Presidential Medal of Freedom to?”

“The very same,” Ray smiled.

“You know Scott,” Ray said, “Only the FBI has those H&K 10mm submachine guns the guys have so I’d speculate that they would have quite the story to tell if they ever opened up. Stacy told me that right before I arrived they added 2 extra-large propane tanks.”

“They were 30,000-gallon propane tanks and they brought in two semi loads of food, too,” Stacy elaborated.

“Ray you sure can pick ‘em,” Scott said.

[If you want to know all about Ray and Stacy read Mountain Man. - TOM]

## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 18 – Two Weeks is Forever

Later, when they were alone. Ray asked if Scott was talking about the survival group or Stacy. Scott's reply was concise and to the point. All he said was, "Yep."

If the experience in 2005 had taught Gary anything, it taught him the value of radiation detection. Not only did he have a high quality Geiger counter and a backup Civil Defense Geiger counter from a bygone era, he had dosimeters and the equipment that went with them plus a remote sensor mounted on that mast with his Diamond antenna. His highest range meter was the AMP 200 with an upper limit of 10,000R. With his hunger satisfied and more coffee in him, he began to think more clearly. He got the dosimeters from the supply room, zapped them and passed them out. Since the external sensor was showing virtually no increase in the outside radiation, he got the cousins to gather up the livestock and herd it into the barn. He also ran Ray back to the highway to get his vehicle and got everyone to put their vehicles in the garage. The radio scanner was still looking for signals and he noticed that only the more distant signals were accompanied with the intense interference. However, there was virtually no local traffic.

Several of the women were well into preparing Thanksgiving dinner when the balloon went up and most of them had grabbed their turkey or roast or whatever they were preparing and hauled it to the shelter with them. With no significant increase in the background radiation, Gary suggested that they go to their homes and bring the remainder of the meals they were working on and they'd just have Thanksgiving Dinner in the shelter. They did that and the men accompanied them and brought along other things the wives suggested. By 2pm the food was ready, but no one seemed to have much of an appetite. Concerns over family, friends and perhaps the country as a whole diminished their appetites. The three old geezers made it their immediate mission to try and cheer people up and see that they sat down and ate at least a little food. They cajoled and did whatever it took to snap the people out of their misery. It was a shame to let the food go to waste, they said, and the radiation levels weren't rising so maybe everyone would be ok.

After everyone ate, Gary got some of the guys to drag out the cots and blankets from the storage shelter and set them up in what had been the storage room but what now was a dormitory. They did everything they could to keep the peoples' moods elevated to near normal. Ron put a DVD on to play a movie and they got a couple of boom boxes for the young people to play music on. Gary set up a tub for Cokes and Pepsis and other beverages, including a couple of six packs of beer and popped some popcorn in the small theatre type popcorn machine. He also discreetly passed out Xanax to anyone who wanted one. He gave periodic reports on the lack of increase in the background radiation and kept reminding everyone that no news was good news.

The truth was that there was a slight increase in the background radiation. Ray and Scott periodically peeked into the radio shack and they could read the digital scale as well as the next person. But they went along with the program and were also reassuring the folks. Gary had spent the money on the Potassium Iodate, too, but until the radiation

levels got to a point for concern, or until they began to venture outside for extended periods of time, it remained in the storeroom.

The shelters were covered by 20' of compacted earth and had a blast door plus a heavy door at the top of the stairs. The air was constantly purified and re-circulated, so there was little cause for concern. Stacy's son, Ryan, seemed like a responsible young man and they asked him if he was willing to check everyone's dosimeters periodically and maintain a log. Ryan was more than willing to oblige. There was about 11 years difference in Ryan and Derek's ages but they seemed to hit it off well and they did have their military experiences to share, limited as Ryan's were.

Day 2...26Nov10...

Sleep hadn't come easy for most of the people so Gary passed out a 'sleeping aid' in the form of 0.5mg of Xanax for the adults and 0.25mg of Xanax for the teenagers who wouldn't or couldn't settle down. For those unaccustomed to the medication, it was a Godsend, although on future nights Gary resolved to use the 0.25mg tablets if they were needed at all. For one thing, Xanax was a potent drug and extremely habit forming. Secondly, it left many people with a drug hangover of significant proportions if over prescribed. And, let's face it Gar-Bear wasn't a doctor. He had the latest PDR on CD, but there is one hell of a lot more to dispensing medicine than the PDR tells you; things like drug interactions and contraindications, etc. were covered, but medical know how can't be printed in a book. For all of the medical supplies and textbooks, it was going to be a tough situation if anyone got really sick. But, knowing that you didn't know was half the battle.

With the increased, but acceptable, background radiation levels they decided to check on the livestock. They were skittish, but otherwise ok. Ryan dutifully recorded the dosimeter readings when the cousins returned and they were in good shape according to the chart taped inside the front cover of the log. For something to do, they dug out the various radio antennas and assembled them. If the radiation levels remained at an acceptable level, they would venture outside briefly on the following day and install them on the mast stubs protruding from the ground and connect the RG213U cables.

There were over 1,000 movies to choose from and several cases of paperbacks for anyone who wanted to read. Most folks were too concerned with their present situation however to be able to sit still for a movie, let alone read a book. Much to Damon's chagrin, Ray and Stacy had paired off and were deeply engrossed in conversation.

"What do you think partner?" Gary asked Ron.

"I don't know what to think Gar-Bear," Ron said, "Did you hear anything on that radio of yours?"

"Not one hell of a lot, no," Gary replied. "Yesterday, I picked up some partial transmissions. Heard the word 'China' and the phrase 'entire country' but I have no idea which

country.”

“Why don’t we put those antennas up now?” Ron suggested. “That digital thingy doesn’t show much radiation.”

“I suppose it would be ok,” Gary agreed. “It wouldn’t hurt to add 10’ to the mast for the antenna I have up and to put up the other antennas. Everything is clearly marked so it won’t be hard to connect the right antennas to the right cables. If there is going to be radiation blowing in from the west, I suppose it makes more sense to do it today rather than to wait until tomorrow.”

“How are you holding up?” Ron asked.

“I’m ok,” Gary said, “I sure hope everyone else is, too. At least we had that practice drill back in 2005, so I was a lot better prepared this time. What do you think went wrong?”

“Good morning guys,” Clarence said entering the radio shack.

“Good morning Clarence, sleep ok?” Gary asked.

“Like a rock, but I don’t want no more of those little pills, thank you very much. What was that stuff?” Clarence asked.

“Well, some folks like to call it freeze dried alcohol,” Gary laughed.

“Figures,” Clarence grinned.

“Want to help us put up some radio antennas?” Ron asked.

“Of course,” Clarence replied, “What we got to do?”

“Put that long sucker on two 10’ mast sections and mount it on the west stub,” Gary explained. “Put the smaller one on two 10’ sections and mount it on the east stub. Be sure to connect the coaxial cables real tight and throw some tape round the masts and cables about every 5’, too. Also, add a 10’ section of mast to the center antenna.”

“Come on Ron,” Clarence said, “This shouldn’t take more than 20 minutes.”

“They be working ok, Gary?” Clarence asked.

“Yes, I picked up the police frequencies from Flagstaff,” Gary said. “They didn’t get hit, but Phoenix took it in the shorts.”

“What about the rest of the country?” Ron asked.

“I haven’t heard much yet,” Gary said. “It appears that it was China who attacked. Ap-

parently they had a boomer off each coast and a fair number of ICBM's. The information is sketchy at best. There were maybe 100 strikes more or less."

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Day 3...27Nov10...

"Don't you ever sleep?" Ron asked entering the radio shack pot of coffee in hand.

"Early to bed, early to rise," Gary replied. "Actually, Ray pulled a shift and Scott relieved him. They seem to be pretty nice guys, Ron. I think maybe we should invite Scott and Susan to put up a home here at the ranch."

"What about Ray?" Ron asked.

"From the way Susan and he have been getting along, I don't think Ray will need a home," Gary chuckled, "But, I could be wrong."

"How old a guy do you suppose he is?" Ron asked.

"I'd put his age about the same as Sharon's, so about 63, give or take," Gary replied.

"And Stacy is about what, 55?" Ron said.

"I think so. If I recall, she was born around 1955 according to her resume," Gary acknowledged.

"They make a nice couple," Ron said.

"They do, don't they," Gary agreed.

"Sort of funny when you think about it," Ron said.

"What's funny?" Gary asked.

"Ray asking if this was a retirement community or survivalist community," Ron explained. "I'd guess you have to say both, wouldn't you."

"The day he showed up, I would have agreed with you partner," Gary nodded, "But right now, I think we're all about surviving."

"How's the radiation doing?" Ron asked.

"It went up some last night, but I think we're ok," Gary replied. "It shouldn't be enough to affect the livestock and if they're ok, we're ok."

"I guess we didn't need this shelter after all," Ron proposed.

"If they'd have hit Flagstaff, you would be singing a different tune pal," Gary disagreed. "Over the years, at least according to some of the things I've read, the targets moved more to the military installations and large cities. Flagstaff just isn't that big."

"Any more news on where they hit?" Ron asked.

"No, but I suspect LA and 'Frisco, DC of course, New York, Chicago, and probably Kansas City," Gary replied.

"Why KC?" Ron asked.

"Big hub for pipelines, et cetera," Gary answered. "But you can count on places like Whitman AFB and the big Army posts and Air Force bases getting hit."

"Whitman AFB?" Ron said, "Oh the B-2's, huh?"

"Yeah and probably San Diego, Norfolk and Pearl Harbor, too," Gary added. "For sure the ten Unified Combat Commands."

In actuality, the Chinese had expended 120 missiles and had experienced about a 10% failure rate. Their missiles were evenly divided among the major US cities and military installations. Most of the missiles that failed were aimed at the cities rather than the military targets. In the final analysis, 57 military targets and 51 major cities had been hit. Had the Chinese had more missiles, they may have been able to fire redundant missiles at the targets, but they fired everything they had. Conscious of a possible attack by the other major power, Russia, Edwards had released half of the US land-based and sea-based missiles against China. Seven Ohio class submarines, each with 24 missiles were on station. Most of the land-based missiles, no estimate of the count was available, successfully launched and hit their targets.

Unlike the Chinese, the Americans launched multiple missiles at the same targets, ensuring total destruction of those targets. Thus the number of Chinese locations hit was fewer than the number of US locations hit. The damage to the Chinese locations was totally devastating while many US cities were less than total losses. America lost about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of its population during the bombings and aftermath. China lost  $\frac{1}{2}$  of its population. The Chinese still outnumber the Americans by a factor of 3 to one. And since the Chinese had initiated the attack, most of their armed forces were tucked away in shelters and avoided injury. The Americans lost about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of their land based military forces and all of their naval forces in port.



## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 19 – And Ever...

Day 4...28Nov10...Mt. Weather...

“Just how bad is it?” Edwards asked.

“We’ll probably lose 100 million Mr. President,” The Chairman replied.

“Our military forces?” Edwards questioned.

“All the ships at sea are ok, but we probably lost 10 divisions,” The Admiral continued. “Mr. President, for the moment, I doubt we have much to fear from the Chinese; they don’t have a large fleet. But in the long run, they may invade. It’s reasonable to presume that they had their army under shelter before they launched the attack.”

“I just don’t understand why they attacked us,” Edwards commented.

“Perhaps they took your remarks as a challenge, Mr. President,” the Admiral replied. “But who knows? I never could completely understand how they think.”

“Any word on how our attack on them went?” the President asked.

“Not until we can get a recon aircraft up, sir,” the Admiral explained. “Cheyenne Mountain and the NSA were total losses. We’re trying to get in touch with our satellites by other means.”

“Keep me informed Admiral,” the President said. “And Admiral, recall the fleets back to the US.”

“Yes Sir,” The Admiral replied.

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The ranch...Day 4...

“Could I have everyone’s attention please,” Gary asked. “So far the background radiation is less than I expected. It’s elevated, but not so highly that we can’t venture outside for brief periods to take care of the livestock. We have protective suits, but we’ll wear them only as a precaution. I repeat; there is no danger from brief periods of exposure to radiation. You guys do a quick hose down of the barn and around it. The livestock should be ok.

“There are ample supplies in the storage shelter to meet our needs for the foreseeable future. I’d appreciate it if you ladies would get together and work out a balanced menu plan. We have every drug anyone on this ranch takes in the medical supplies. We also have first aid supplies and other necessities. However, we do not have a doctor. So be

extra careful and avoid injuries.”

“Ryan,” Gary continued, “Will check those dosimeters about 3 times a day. So far, no one has picked up anything more than normal background radiation, perhaps less, except for those of us who have ventured outside. And, none of us has anything to worry about. I can tell you that the US was apparently attacked by China. Flagstaff was not hit, but Phoenix was. You can probably assume that most of the largest cities in the US were hit, as were all of the major military installations. We have no idea of the extent of the damage to any of those places, but remember one thing. Missiles carry far smaller nukes than bombers, so it could be a lot worse. As soon as the National Command Authority, whomever that might be, makes an announcement, we’ll pass it along. Meanwhile, hang in there.

“You know folks, we survived that mess back in 2005 and the country recovered,” Gary went on. “If we find ourselves in a defensive situation, we are well prepared to deal with it. We have more than enough weapons and ammunition for a small army. I can’t tell you whether or not this country will be invaded. But if it is, we’ll do whatever it takes to survive. Ray, I noticed that you were particularly fond of those Barrett rifles. Go pick one out and put your name on it, it’s yours. The TAC-50s are Clarence’s and mine, so hands off.

“Scott, we have some pretty fancy scopes that will work just fine on your rifle, I’ll give you one after this meeting. Ryan, you can help yourself to a Barrett, M-24 or M-40. Most of our handguns are a handful for the ladies, but they should be able to handle those submachine guns just fine. Because of the children, we’ll keep the weapons, except for sidearms, in the armory. Ray, I noticed that you have a fine pair of Kimber’s, but if you want, you can take one of those 10mm handguns. The same goes for the rest of you men. I’d prefer it if you all wore a handgun at all times. There a 50’ range set up in the storage room. Pick a gun and get used to it.”

“We do have a few handguns of a lighter caliber if any of you ladies feel the need to carry a weapon.” Ron added.

After the meeting, Ray approached Stacy. “Stacy, if you want a handgun, I have a service issue 9mm Beretta,” he offered.

“Will you teach me to shoot it?” Stacy asked.

“Sure,” Ray said, “And since I have 2 of the Kimber’s, I think I’ll ask Ryan if he wants to carry one of them.”

“I’m sure that he would like that,” Stacy smiled.

Ryan was overjoyed at the prospect of carrying one of Ray’s Kimber’s. The three of them picked up some ear protectors, frangible 9mm and .45 caliber ammo from the armory and headed to the range. Stacy was a natural, but Ryan was even better. Of

course, Ryan had an advantage over his mother; he'd done a lot of shooting with the 9mm Beretta and the step up to the .45 wasn't that harsh. Ray wondered what Ryan would be like with the M-24 SWS he'd picked out and tagged with his name. Ray had shot Scott's Barrett many times, but maybe the new Springfield scope would make a difference. Strangely, Ryan said, "I'll leave the two of you alone and get back to my duties." That was a funny way to put it, but Ray realized that he was rapidly getting fond of Ryan's mother.

Before the day was over, all of the men who didn't have a handgun had checked one out and had become familiar with them. There were plenty of the leather flap holsters for the 1911's so they mostly ended up with a pistol belt, holster, 10mm model 1026 and 4 extra magazines in two pouches. Gary gave each of the cousins one of the new M1A Super Match rifles and told them that as soon as they could get outside, he expected them to get extremely proficient with them. With those rifles, he said, if they couldn't shoot a MOA, it was because they weren't trying hard enough. They got the message and chuckled. If they shot that badly, he could have his rifles back and they'd use their own rifles. Their Marine Corp drill instructors would probably come back from the grave and take back their Expert marksmanship badges, too. They had only been asked if they were veterans, not the details of their service.

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Day 5...29Nov10...

Through the night, the radiation levels had dropped from being slightly elevated to normal. Apparently the winds had been in the favor of the residents of the ranch. When the cousins went to check on the livestock, they took along the CD V-700 Geiger counter and reported back that the radiation levels were so low that unless more radiation blew in, the ranch was home free. No one objected when the cousins went to the 1,000-meter range Gary had had them built some time back to practice. Ray got his new Barrett and Ryan his new M-24 and the two of them, accompanied by Stacy, joined the cousins to practice.

Gary came along later with an M-24. He set up a silhouette at 1,000 meters and proceeded to fire 5 rounds at it. The group wasn't especially tight, about 1.5 MOA and all in the black, but he walked off muttering, "I could have if I'd wanted to," whatever that meant. They were pretty surprised that he could even see that far, even with the scope, but they made a note not to PO him.

Later that day, the three old geezers returned to the outdoor range. This time the targets were much closer. The MP5/10SD6's made short work of those silhouettes too. They even set up some more targets and practiced their 'quick draws' with the Vaqueros. It was like John Payne had said on his TV show, *The Restless Gun* (1957), accuracy came first and speed came second. It didn't matter how much faster you were if you couldn't hit the target. It surely showed who'd practiced his fast draw the most, Gary was popping it out in about 0.5 seconds (not extremely fast) and he never missed the

target. Ron and Clarence simply had to practice more, he told them.

The ladies had come up with a menu schedule that proved to be interesting. I guess you would have to call it the Ethnic Nights menu. It included Mexican, Italian, German, American and French for Monday – Thursday + Saturday, Pizza on Friday nights and steaks or roasts on Sundays. Despite the non-existent radiation levels, everyone agreed to spend their nights in the shelter until the 14 days were up. It being a Wednesday, the menu was American, fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy to be exact with corn for a vegetable.

“You know what Ron?” Gary asked.

“Tell me,” Ron said.

“Well, if today were Wednesday July 23, 2004, I could stand in my backyard and watch the hills 2½ miles south of my house burn,” Gary said. “Remember the Crown fire? It was all over the news.”

“Yeah, just be glad you’re not Clarence,” Ron said, “Those flames were only a mile from his house.”

“Speaking of Clarence,” Gary said, “He should be happy. We’re having fried chicken tonight.”

“I thought you liked fried chicken too, Gar-Bear,” Ron raised his brows.

“I used to, but you know what partner,” Gary said, “The idea that it wasn’t an official meal unless I had a portion of meat 3 times bigger than I could possibly eat got kind of old. One night Sharon asked me what I wanted for supper. I didn’t give it a thought; we had about 20 boxes of macaroni and cheese on the shelf. So I said macaroni and cheese and maybe some green beans to go with it.”

“Yeah so?” Ron asked.

“So, she goes to the store, buys 2 pounds of extra sharp cheddar and some chipped beef and makes a macaroni & cheese & chipped beef casserole,” Gary explained. “Let me ask you something, do green beans really come with bacon in the can?”

“Not that I know of, why?” Ron asked.

“That’s what I said, too,” Gary laughed, “But Sharon said ‘well that’s the way you like them’. I got to thinking and a year before, I mentioned that it might be nice to have bacon bits and onions in the green beans once in a great while.”

“So she fixed green beans with bacon and onions in it every time after that?” Ron asked.

“No,” Gary shook his head, “Sharon doesn’t like the onions.”

“If you’re done bad mouthing your wife, partner, I think the chicken is done,” Ron replied.

“Don’t say anything to her, ok?” Gary asked.

“I won’t, butthead, but remind me to tell you about some of Linda’s tricks some time,” Ron grinned.

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Day 6...30Nov10...

“Morning partner, what’s new?” Ron asked.

“Shh, listen,” Gary said.

Gary had latched onto a clear channel with his Yaesu radio.

*...band of refugees from Los Angeles have attacked Palm Springs. If anyone can hear my voice, please send help. This is...* and the signal abruptly terminated.

“Well,” Ron said, “It sounds like you were right about LA. If there’re refugees and they’re attacking people, things must be pretty bad out there.”

“I agree Ron,” Gary said. “I’m just glad we didn’t go to Holbrook.”

“I thought that was your favorite town?” Ron laughed.

“Well, at least we’re not on I-40 up here in the middle of nowhere,” Gary explained. “You would think that people would be better prepared in California for crying out loud. It’s earthquake country.”

“Well, they must have been somewhat prepared,” Ron said, “That sounded like gunfire in the background.”

“You know what I mean darn it,” Gary said. “Prepared with food and water. And besides, Palm Springs is east of LA. Who in their right mind would go east?”

“Where do you want them to go, Palmdale?” Ron asked.

“They did last time,” Gary replied.

## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 20 – Freedom

With the freedom to get outside, even for a while, the time seemed to pass more quickly. The Marines came pouring out of the 29 Palms base and put a quick end to the attack on Palm Springs. They also put an end to the eastward migration of the people from Los Angeles and began to transport them north to Ft. Irwin. Apparently Ft. Irwin was not in the path of the radioactive fallout and it was blowing more to the southeast. That probably meant that the Marine Corps had abandoned Yuma and moved the population further north, perhaps also to Ft. Irwin.

Day 15...09Dec10...

“I would have thought that the Chinese would have hit 29 Palms and Ft. Irwin,” Ron said, “But I guess not. I wonder where they did hit?”

“You would have thought that the NCA would have been on the radio by now,” Gary observed. “This almost reminds me of 2005.”

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“Mr. President,” the Admiral half yelled, “You can’t put this off any longer. You must make an announcement to the American people to let them know someone is in charge!”

“In charge of what Admiral?” the President shrugged, “half the Navy is gone, for sure  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the Army is gone, we lost 50 cities and 100 million people. What do you want me to tell them? Cheer up, it could be worse?”

“Frankly you wimpy piece of crap, I don’t care what you tell them,” the Admiral responded. “My resignation will be on your desk in an hour. I’ll go help them myself if I have to. Kerry must have thought he was bulletproof to choose you as a running mate.”

“I won’t let you quit,” Edwards shouted. “You’re fired!”

“Doesn’t make much difference either way does it John,” the Admiral said, “At the rate you’re going, I’ll die of old age before I ever see my pension.”

What’s this? A whimper in the White House, er, Mt. Weather? Who would have thought? Come to think of it, what had John Edwards ever really done but win elections? Don’t ask me, I have no idea. Madam Clinton wouldn’t have been a wimp. According to A. Friend, she’d have killed Kerry herself. Did that scene with Edwards really happen? This is fiction and I get confused.

◦

“As much as I hate doing this, we’re going to have to prepare for a fight,” Gary said.

“Mount the weapons back on the Hummers. Excluding the children, we have 22 men and 14 women. The women are going to need to take responsibility for protecting the children, so that leaves just the 22 men to conduct any operations we might need to undertake. I really don’t believe we can count on anyone outside of this group, at least not for now. Scott and Susan have agreed to move to the ranch. That means we need to get them a home and furnishings. We can use the 5-ton trucks to tow the 3 sections of a triplewide in. But, I figure that the best we can do is pour a slab or strips and use mounting pedestals instead of putting in a basement. We can pick up the furniture first and do it all in one trip. We should top off all of the vehicles and pull the 600-gallon tanker with one of the Hummers and refill it. Any suggestions?”

“We should let David’s boys’ drive the Hummer’s,” Bill suggested. “And, why don’t Damon, Derek and David drive the 5-ton trucks? You three and either Ray or Scott can man the guns on the Hummer’s and the rest of us will ride shotgun.”

“Let’s see, 7 drivers and four gunners,” Gary said. “That would leave us 11 people riding shotgun. If we have 2 shot gunners in each of the 3 5-tons and 1 in each of the 4 Hummer’s to pass ammo and such that will leave us one person leftover. If we take a pickup to pull the tanker, it will leave us one short.”

“I’ll drive the pickup and Ray can ride shotgun with me,” Stacy offered.

“I wasn’t planning on taking any of you ladies on this little jaunt,” Gary responded.

“I’ve got a dozen years on YOU Gary Olsen,” Stacy snapped, “And I can drive as good as any of those boys, so WHY NOT?”

“Uh, I guess Stacy will be driving the pickup and Ray riding shotgun for her, folks,” Gary said. “Stacy, you CAN drive a pickup with a 6-speed shift I assume?”

The look she gave old Gar-Bear answered that question. The only other thing bothering Gary was who was going to protect Ray from Stacy. It looked to him like she had her mind made up on more than one account, and after such a short time, too. Gary missed the small smile that formed on Ryan’s lips. Ryan knew his mother had waited for a very long time for just the right man to come along and apparently she’d set her sights on Ray. It was ok with him; Ray seemed to be like his Dad would have been if he hadn’t been killed in Desert Storm. Admittedly, Ryan had felt cheated when the promise to go to West Point fell through, but he’d become an officer despite circumstances. Sure, he’d wanted to be part of “The Long Gray Line” that was West Point, but they didn’t have a monopoly on Duty, Honor, Country. He’d do his part, every elected official and military officer was sworn to “protect and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic,” not the President or Congress.

Day 16...10Dec10...

They departed around 5am, well before the sun came up. They were going to Flagstaff

and buy what they needed and if they couldn't buy it, they planned to steal it. Scott and Susan had tentatively decided on furnishings and he had her list. Everyone was dressed in BDU's, including Stacy, although the uniform didn't really do her figure justice. Gary was in the lead vehicle, a Hummer with a Ma-Deuce mounted and Scott was riding shotgun for him. Gary intended that Scott try to bluff the folks in Flagstaff into believing that they were a military convoy sent to pick up a triple wide and furnishings ordered by a retiring military General. It was pretty thin, but he hadn't had much time to think up anything better. However about halfway to Flagstaff, Gary pulled the convoy to a halt.

"Guys, this will never work," he said, "Who is going to believe a bunch of guys our age are in the Army? Let's get the cousins up on the guns and the three of us will take their places. Scott, you tell them that we're retired Sergeants here to pay for the General's purchases, if they ask."

It still strained credulity, but they might pull it off. It was either that, or blast their way through if there was a roadblock that wouldn't let them pass. The Army had been running convoys in and out of Flagstaff since the attack. They didn't know that. The Flagstaff cop barely gave them a second look. They hit a likely looking furniture store; all of the stores were closed, so they loaded the furniture Scott picked out onto the trucks. Gary collected the tags and added them up. He put down the exact amount plus \$500. Their next stop was a mobile home dealer, also closed. They hooked up to the only triple wide and because they had purchased all of their trailers from this same dealer, Gary wrote him a note and laid down the cash plus \$500 for the pedestals. All that the note said was, "If this isn't enough, you know where I live. (signed) Gary Olsen."

While they hooked up the three home sections, that was a real challenge; Stacy and Ray took some cash and went in search of fuel. There was a single station open and as they pulled in, a real Army vehicle was pulling out. They pulled to the pump and told the attendant to 'filler up'. The attendant reached to fill the pickup and Ray smiled and shook his head. He pointed to the trailer. The attendant told Stacy to pull around between the islands so he could fill the trailer from both diesel pumps. When finally the trailer was full (What is the pump rate on a gas station diesel pump?) after what seemed like forever, the attendant pulled out a clipboard, wrote in 600 in the quantity column and asked Ray to put in this vehicle number and sign. While the trailer was filling, the attendant approached Ray.

"I didn't know the Army was using Dodge pickups these days," the man said.

"Wouldn't know," Ray said, "We're Air Force."

"Oh," the attendant said and returned to the trailer, which still bore the Air Force markings from before the Air Force sold it as salvage. They'd camo'd the trailer but left the numbers showing through. Never argue with a filling station attendant, especially after he just gave you 600-gallons of diesel. Just fill in a phony number and sign someone else's name. Free is good; they would have to 'buy' fuel there more often. By the time



Stacy and Ray returned to the trailer dealer's, the others had managed to figure out how to tow the home sections and had them hooked up. Ron had always told Gary, "Act like you own the place." It worked this time.

Day 17...11Dec10...

Ray had remembered that they needed concrete and they had headed for a home improvement store. They had filled the pickup with cement, sand and gravel and hoped they had enough. They'd put in four strips to support the three sections, that's all the material they had, and start on the home the next day. If you've never seen a mobile home assembled, you wouldn't realize what they forgotten to pick up. But, it wasn't worth the risk to drive back to Flagstaff for the assembly equipment. So, they had to muscle the sections together. It was only a few inches, but it felt like 10' by the time they were done. Of course it helps to have winches on the vehicles to pull the tires sideways.

Day 20...14Dec10...

With the home finally assembled and the furniture in place, Scott and Susan invited everyone to a house warming. They had hot canapés (chopped up wieners in barbeque sauce), hors d'oeuvres (tuna salad on crackers), and cocktails (cold Budweiser or iced tea) for their guests. How does that go? Ah, a good time was had by all. After the party, Stacy offered to walk Ray home. They had a pretty good time, too.

Day 21...15Dec10...

"So Ray," Gary asked, "When's the wedding?"

"Uh, I didn't ask her to marry me," Ray stumbled.

"That's ok," Gary said, "I'll ask Stacy myself."

"Don't you think I should ask her first?" Ray stammered.

"What for Ray?" Gary laughed, "She's already got her mind made up. I'll tell you what, you go ask her when the wedding is and let me know, ok?"

"I guess," Ray replied, feeling really out of character. He walked over to Stacy's home and knocked on the door.

"Hi Ray, come in." Stacy said, "Would you like a cup of coffee or something?"

"Uh Stacy," Ray stammered, "Gary sent me over here to ask you when the wedding is."

"The 28th of December," Stacy said, "The day after my birthday."

"Am I invited?" Ray asked.

“Only if you want to live, I’m a dead shot remember?” Stacy replied. “Want that coffee now?”

“You wouldn’t happen to have some bourbon would you?” Ray gulped.

Good news spreads fast. The only problem they had was that no one was a JP or a minister or a judge. Bill offered to perform a Comanche wedding ceremony and they all agreed it would have to do. I wonder if that’s anything like a Jewish wedding where you get to stomp the glass.

Day 34...28Dec10...

Their one-hour ceremony followed tradition as nearly as possible. Bill united Stacy and Ray in a replica of an ancient village. The couple entered the council fire area. “The fire was and is sacred to The People, and is a living memorial. It has been with The People from the beginning of time,” Bill said before the ceremony. Stacy wore a white cotton dress. Ray wore his uniform. The couple was wrapped in blue blankets, which represented their old ways of weakness, sorrow, failures and spiritual depression. They were followed by relatives (Ryan, Scott and Susan) to the sacred fire (a bonfire in a charcoal grill). A holy man (Bill) blessed the union and all those present in an elaborate ceremony. The couple exchanged baskets, the groom’s basket contained a package of hot dogs and handkerchief, representing his promise to feed and clothe her. The bride’s basket was filled with buns and mustard, representing her promise to nurture and support him. The couple then shed the blue blankets and was enveloped, by relatives (Ryan, Scott and Susan), in a white blanket representing their new ways of happiness, fulfillment and peace. Stomp dancers (Gary, Ron and Clarence) performed for the couple and a prayer of continuance was said to end the ceremony. Or, something like that, but it was a touching wedding. And, Gary got to kiss the bride (be still my heart).

Day 35...29Dec10...

Gary was pounding on Stacy and Ray’s door. “Come on you guys, the honeymoon’s over.”

Ray yanked the door opened and laughed, “The honeymoon has only begun Gar-Bear. You can have her when the honeymoon is over in about 150 years.”

“She’d be worth waiting for, Ray,” Gary admitted, “Look, we need to discuss what we are going to do for defenses and seeing how you’re a retired Army man, I figured you could work with Derek, Scott and Ryan and work something out.”

“What do you have for me to work with?” Ray said. “Come in, it’s cold out there. Coffee?”

“Black. Well, in addition to what you’ve seen, we have some Claymores, some AT-4s,

night vision equipment, Garand's, riot guns, some FAL's, 2 semi loads, or more, of ammo, radios, hand grenades, the Interceptor vests with level 4 plates, quite an assortment of 40mm grenades, some of that new ammo, the M993 and M995, .50 cal in match, API, APIT and Mk 211, suppressors on everything, all the Alice gear we can ever use, Camelback's, plus some explosives and detonators. You know Ray, just the usual assortment of stuff most retirees have."

"Ever since I met you guys, something has been bothering me," Ray said, "Were you ever on TV?"

"Larry King Live," Gary said.

"That explains a lot," Ray laughed.

## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 21 – Here We Go Again

“You didn’t happen to catch Geraldo’s appearance in LA, did you?” Ray asked.

“Clarence did, but I had something to do that day,” Gary replied.

“That was quite a shot wasn’t it? Got the SOB from 500 yards,” Ray recalled.

“600,” Gary said.

“Uh, uh, so tell me what other mischief have you boys been up to?” Ray asked.

“Are you a cop or an undercover agent or anything Ray?” Gary asked. “Cause if you are, and I answer that question, I sure hate what I’d have to do next.”

“Yeah, like you killed Kerry or something,” Ray laughed.

Gary didn’t laugh. Gary didn’t do anything. Gary just stared at Ray with dead eyes.

“But where did you get SA-7 missiles?” Ray sputtered.

“Stingers,” Gary said.

Ray was suddenly very certain that he’d opened his mouth and learned things he never wanted to know. Gary didn’t have any sort of expression on his face whatsoever. And, Ray noticed that for such a jovial man, at this very moment Gary’s eyes looked dead.

“I’m sorry I brought it up and I’ll never say anything to anyone Gar-Bear,” Ray said evenly.

“Don’t you want to know the rest?” Gary asked. “In for a penny, in for a pound (sterling).”

“Only if you want to tell me,” Ray replied softly.

“Well Ray, the three of us have been raising hell ever since 2005,” Gary said. “Killed us a bunch of the California National Guard and FEMA. We attacked some of those camps and set the people free. We were behind all of those bridges going down. Then we went around the country and blew up some more relo camps. That was tough, with that new design and all. And finally, I sent George W. Bush a personal message after he got out of office explaining how I felt about him. Finally, we visited Atlanta to see Kerry’s speech but somebody shot down his plane with two stinger missiles. Whoever did that might have made a mistake. This Edwards guy, assuming he’s still alive, is hiding out somewhere. We might have done some other stuff, but I forget. I have memory problems, you know.”

“You know Gary,” Ray smiled, “That memory problem must be catching, I believe I have a touch of it myself. And, I must say, I really like your disguises, you guys actually look and act old.”

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Later that morning...

“We looked around at the possibilities of defending this ranch,” Ray said. “It is far too open to properly defend. We could build some fixed fortifications, but as Patton said, ‘Fixed fortifications are monuments to man’s stupidity’. Those shelters are a good idea, but you might as well put a flag on the radio antennas or post a sign that says ‘Here we are’. That cyclone fence accomplishes the same thing.”

“Ray, we can hide the antennas and there is a shutoff valve on the shower drain outside shelter blast door,” Gary explained. “If push comes to shove, we can hole up in the shelter and flood the entrance.”

“That really doesn’t solve your problem Gary,” Ray observed, “You have the vehicles and the livestock. Surely anyone who attacked the ranch would drive them off and leave you on foot.”

“Assuming that anyone found us in the first place,” Gary commented. “You can’t really see anything from the highway, so if we eliminated any sign of a road coming to the ranch, people would probably pass us by. And, we could slop some earth tone paint on the cyclone fence to make it harder to spot.”

“That might just work,” Ray allowed, “Less is more?”

“Of course, we’ll have to go back to Flagstaff for paint and some equipment,” Ron said, “Unless you intend to be Huck Finn and paint 4 miles of fence with a brush.”

“Let’s make up a list of supplies people and we’ll risk another trip,” Gary suggested. “Anyone need anything else while we’re going?”

“We could use more diesel fuel,” Ray offered.

“We don’t have another tanker,” Gary said.

“No, but that service station in Flagstaff is supplying the Army and they must be getting the diesel from somewhere,” Ray countered. “We could hijack a tanker.”

“Anything else?” Gary asked.

“Portable generators for the paint sprayers,” Damon suggested. “And some gas to run them.”

“Ron add that to the list,” Gary grinned. “What else?”

“All of our pickups run on gasoline,” Bill commented, “How about gasoline?”

“How about you trade the pickups in for diesels?” Gary suggested. “Drive them to Flagstaff, pick out new pickups, and leave your old ones.” If we’re going to get lots of diesel, we’ll need more PRI-D. Add that to the list Ron.”

“There’s a Big Five in Flagstaff, we ought to browse,” Clarence suggested.

“Maybe we should just move to Flagstaff,” Gary joked. “Ok. Tomorrow morning, we’ll exchange the pickups, borrow a diesel tanker, paint, generators and some sporting goods.”

“Why don’t we go today?” Ray asked.

“Suits me,” Gary replied. “Ron and Clarence, dig out those Marshal’s badges and ID; this soldier bit wasn’t my best idea.”

“You have some fake ID’s?” Ray asked.

“Hell no,” Gary laughed. “They’re real. They’d even pass a computer check if there were any computer’s running. But, if you’d prefer Ray, we can be Secret Service or FBI.”

“I’m sorry I asked,” Ray muttered.

About an hour later, the 4 pickups, 2 Hummers and 3 5-ton trucks left for Flagstaff. The first stop was a paint store where they loaded up on 5-gallon pails of paint and Wagner sprayers. The next stop was the Big Five store where they impounded all of the GPS receivers and archery equipment (well, they had 4 Indian families). Next, they ‘traded in’ the pickups at the Dodge dealer’s. Home Depot was the source for generators, building supplies, Wagner sprayers that had their own motors and gas cans. Then they stopped by the Service station.

“I can fill your gas cans,” the attendant said, “But we’re out of diesel.”

“Darn,” Gary said, “Will you be getting in more?”

“Well, there’s a delivery tanker due in from Tucson in about two hours,” the attendant replied, “But that fuel is earmarked for the Army.”

“Tucson?” Gary said, “They must be coming up on I-17, huh?”

“Yeah, same as always,” the attendant said.

"I guess we'll just have to settle for the gas then," Gary responded dejectedly. "Fill the cans, please."

Two hours probably meant that the truck was just passing through Phoenix, or what was left of it. There was a rest stop about 15 miles south of Flagstaff, too. When the attendant finished, Gary paid him the \$1,000 for the 200 gallons of gas and they headed south on I-17. At the rest stop, they pulled the trucks across the median and blocked the road. A Hummer was parked on each shoulder. Roughly an hour later, two Chevron delivery trucks appeared northbound. The drivers stopped their vehicles just short of the roadblock. Clarence, Gary and Ron walked over to the first truck, holding their USMS ID high.

"US Marshals, Mister," Gary said, "Is this the fuel shipment for Flagstaff?"

The armed guard in the passenger's seat visibly relaxed.

"Yes, why are you stopping us?" the driver asked.

"We had a report that someone planted bombs on these two trucks," Gary explained. "The Army here," he said pointing to the Hummer's, "Sent us down to stop you and disarm the bombs. This might be tricky, so you guys had better hike down the road a ways until we can get them disarmed."

"Are you really Marshals?" the driver prudently asked.

"Look at the Badge and ID yourself," Gary said passing his credentials to the driver. As you might imagine, the driver had never seen any US Marshal badges or ID's in his life. He asked to see Ron's and then Clarence's. They were all the same and embossed.

"We'd better get the hell out of here Jim," he said to the guard. The two drivers and the two guards took off down the road, double time.

"Derek, stop by the auto parts stores and get all the PRI-D you can find," Gary directed. "Did we forget anything?"

Day 36...30Dec10...

It had been after dark by the time they'd returned to the ranch. Nevertheless, they took time to put camo netting over the two tankers. The following morning, the 30th, Damon put those Wagner sprayers to good use and by lunchtime, the tankers just looked like part of the scenery. The pickups were nice too. They were identical to the ones everyone else had. Ray wasn't about to trade in his F-100; it had character plus about 300,000 miles on the odometer. While the cousins did their best to eliminate any sign of the small dirt road leading from the highway, all of the paint sprayers were put to use. They used a mixture of colors, sage, tan, brown and green, one color to a sprayer, working from the gate to the north and south. By sundown, they had made it about ¼

mile in each direction. The cousins couldn't really hide the road, but they eliminated the tire tracks and transplanted a few bushes. They made it about ½ way to the fence from the road.

Day 37...31Dec10...

The folks started at dawn. By early afternoon, the cousins had reached the fence and the entire east side of the fence was painted. The fence blended in well and except for the shadow it cast, wasn't particularly noticeable. Since it was New Year's Eve, they knocked off early. There still hadn't been a word from the NCA, either. Speculation at the ranch and on the Ham radio bands was that Edwards had been killed in the attack. Some of the Hams pointed out that the attack must have taken out every government official in the US; otherwise someone would have come forward. Gary figured that Edwards was alive and just hiding. He had written that Dubya had hidden out for 5 years in one of his stories.

The folks 40 and up were going to have a party in the shelter that night and play some '50's & '60's music. The younger people had cleaned up a space in the garage for their party that featured what they claimed was music. Gary had dug around in the supplies and pulled out a case of Distiller's Masterpiece Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey from the Jim Beam Distillery. This was the really good stuff. Before the party, Gary gave each of the cousins, Ray and Scott a bottle of the bourbon to put up for later. Ron. Clarence and he set out an assortment of liquors, mixes, beverages and snacks for the party. They earned a break and though there wasn't a lot to celebrate, it would be good to unwind a little.



## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 22 – The Morning After

01Jan11...

Ron, Clarence and Gary had the responsibility of cleaning up after the party. The liquor had barely been touched and everyone had been more in the mood to listen to the music than dance. It took all of 10 minutes to pick up and Gary went into the radio shack and turned on his radios. There wasn't much new chatter, although from the sounds of it, the attack by the Chinese hadn't been as devastating as he had first imagined. Some of the missiles had missed their intended targets or failed to detonate entirely. Others had detonated at a high altitude and their greatest damage had been the EMP they caused. But, from the sounds of it a goodly number of the warheads were right on target and had exploded as intended.

Back when they'd been hiding out at the Underground City, they had ended up with a lot of the camo netting. Clarence had suggested the night before that they use the netting on the buildings and homes and park the Airstreams inside. Bill, Jonas, Robert and James were hard at work on the netting when the three of them emerged from the shelter. Two crews of young people were painting fence like crazy, almost making a game out of it. There didn't seem to be much for the three of them to do, so they went to the barn, saddled their horses and rode up to the front gate. There was a nip in the air, but it was tolerable. From the highway, the road into the property wasn't really noticeable unless you knew what you were looking for. They angled to the north to a rise and viewed the ranch. The fence was slowly being blended into the background and it looked like 2 of the homes had disappeared.

"That was a good idea Clarence," Ron said cheerfully.

"Yeah Ron," Clarence bubbled, "Worked better than I thought it would."

"I thought that Damon did a poor job on those trailers," Gary commented, "But I can't see them from here."

Damon must have agreed, because he'd put them in the garage. They rode back to the barn, rubbed down the horses and went for a late lunch. While they were eating Ray came by and wanted to know if they had any more camo netting. When they'd told him no, he said he'd take care of it and left. They heard the 5-ton trucks start up a little later but didn't give it much thought. When they came out of Ron's after lunch, James told them that Damon, Derek, Ray, Stacy, Ryan and Scott had gone to Flagstaff for supplies. Four homes were now completely draped. Gary found the missing Chevron trucks in the garage and realized why he hadn't seen them from the rise. He joined Ron and Clarence in the shelter where they were having dessert, e.g. popcorn and cokes and watching a movie.

"Kind of stupid for them to go to Flagstaff in the middle of the afternoon on New Year's Day," Gary observed.

“Well, the stores won’t be crowded,” Ron laughed.

“Yeah Gary,” Clarence smiled, “Lighten up. They’ll be ok.”

“What are you watching?” Gary asked.

“Alien vs. Predator,” Ron replied.

“Oh, that ought to be good,” Gary smirked, “I’ll be in the radio shack.”

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In the aftermath of Kerry’s death and Edward’s ascension to the Presidency, Edwards had appointed Senator Bill Nelson, from Florida, to be Vice-President under the 25th Amendment. Nelson, who had first been elected to the Senate in 2000, was a former Astronaut. At Mt. Weather, Nelson patiently waited for Edwards to act. After the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs had resigned, Nelson did everything in his power to get Edwards to act. He failed. Section 4 of the 25th Amendment states, in part, “Whenever the Vice president and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the president pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.”

Remember the movie *Air Force One* starring Harrison Ford and Glenn Close? That was the document that they were trying to get her to sign in the movie. The surviving Cabinet members and the Vice President signed the declaration and gave copies to the president pro tempore and the Speaker. Nelson was now the Acting President, effective at noon 01Jan11. If you’ve ever seen *In Harm’s Way*, you may remember the speech Nimitz gave that ended with the statement, *...indecision is a virus that can run through an army and destroy its will to win. Or even to survive.* That statement certainly applied in this situation. Nimitz (Henry Fonda) had been referring to General George B. McClellan in the film and had been explaining to Admiral Rockwell Torrey (John Wayne) that Lincoln’s solution to McClellan had been to appoint Grant. Like the John Wayne character, Nelson was both an organizer and decisive. He consulted with the remaining members of the Joint Chiefs and scheduled a broadcast on NPR for 9pm EST from Mt. Weather. Mt. Weather had been on the Ham bands most of the day announcing the forthcoming radio broadcast.

Gary caught the news on one of the Ham bands and looked for his list of Arizona radio stations. KNAU-FM: 88.7, Flagstaff and KPUB-FM: 91.7 were the same station. KJZZ-FM: 89.5, was from the Phoenix area, and KNAG-FM: 90.3, was from Grand Canyon. He put on KNAG and at 7pm MST, Nelson addressed the nation for the first time.

*My Fellow Americans,*

*“My name is Bill Nelson and I am the Vice President. As most of you know, I was appointed by President Edwards to be the Vice President after the untimely death of President Kerry. President Edwards was determined to be unable to discharge his duties under the 25th Amendment and I have assumed the role of Acting President until President Edwards is able to resume his duties. This decision did not come lightly and it was only after the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff resigned that this action was considered.*

*On Thanksgiving Day, our nation was struck by the Chinese in a pre-emptive nuclear strike. President Edwards responded in kind and dispatched approximately ½ of our missiles in retaliation against China. He also struck the North Korean Capital, P’yongyang. We have only recently been able to reestablish contact with our satellites, but over flights by SR-71 aircraft have shown that nearly ½ of the Chinese population and most of its armed forces survived our attack.*

*The United States was more fortunate than first believed, but the death toll is now estimated to exceed 50 million. Initial reports put our military losses at 66 percent of our Army and all of our in port naval vessels. However, more recent reports reveal that we lost ⅓ of our Army and ½ of the in port naval fleet. President Edwards recalled all of our other naval vessels to the US. Consequently, we can field 10 Divisions of Army and approximately ¾ of our naval forces.*

*Five Divisions of the US Army will be tasked in the effort to aid our citizens. The remaining 5 Divisions and the US Marine Corps will be dispatched to our west coast to repel any possible invasion. Any members of the Armed Forces who were on leave and are able to return to duty are urged to do so. Effective immediately all members of the National Guard Units of all states are federalized to assist in the helping the citizens of the US who were affected by strikes on our cities; however, since individual circumstances may vary, individuals on leave and members of the National Guards who are unable to report will not be penalized.*

*Effective immediately I am declaring martial law for the duration of this emergency and a dusk to dawn curfew is hereby imposed. However, since individual circumstances may vary, travel will be permitted in extreme situations. Military commanders will be instructed to issue travel permits for travel during the curfew hours. The presumption will be that the travel is necessary, however, abuse of the privilege will be dealt with by denying further travel during curfew hours.*

*I realize that many American citizens believe in the Right to Keep and Bear Arms. The strength of those convictions were clearly shown when a Democratic Congress was pressured into repealing all of the gun laws back to and including the Gun Control Act of 1968. I disagree, but I will not enter into a debate concerning this issue, and under the present circumstances neither will I dispute the wisdom of the American people. Therefore, until further notice, all federal gun law are hereby suspended. I recommend the*

*states follow my lead. The United States may end up needing the American public to directly support our Armed Forces if China does indeed invade this country. However, anyone using a firearm in a criminal act will be dealt with on the harshest possible terms. Permit me to explain. Anyone using a firearm in the commission of a felony is to be shot on sight. Anyone using a firearm in the commission of a misdemeanor will be arrested and charged with felonious possession of a firearm.*

*As some of you may recall, when General Clark seized power, he forced former President George Bush to issue various restrictions including restricting travel to a 20-mile radius from your home, granting full police powers to FEMA, monitoring Internet and telephone communications and by suspending Posse Comitatus and the Writ of Habeas Corpus. He also implemented food rationing. None of those measures will be taken. However, if you have extra food, I urge you to share it with your friends and neighbors who may be less fortunate than yourself.*

*FEMA is the Federal Emergency Management Agency, not the Gestapo. They will follow their mandate precisely and lend assistance to the American public where needed. I will ask the American Red Cross to open and manage voluntary assistance centers for people requiring assistance. I will ask Congress to fund FEMA and those centers without restriction on any rights of the individuals who seek help from FEMA or chose to use those camps.*

*It is my belief that many of the events of 2005 and thereafter were the work of a small group of individuals. I do not know their identities nor do I wish to know who they are. I will say this, 'Gentlemen, stop your engines'. American needs your help, not a further demonstration of your political views. Whoever you are, wherever you are, don't blow up any more power lines or bridges. You do yourselves and your country a disservice if you do so.*

*God Bless America and God Bless the American People.*

*Thank you and goodnight.*

"This guy is a Democrat?" Gary asked. "Who would have thunk?"

"Sounds to me like he is an American first and a Democrat second," Ron opined. "If he's for real, I could vote for a guy like that."

"I'm almost willing to say that if he is for real, I'd eat my hat," Gary responded, "But I think I'd better keep my mouth shut this time."

"But Gary," Clarence protested, "He's a politician."

"You know what Clarence?" Gary said, "That man didn't sound like any politician I've ever heard. We'd better just lay back and continue our project."

The door to the shelter was open, and a while later, the three men heard the rumble of the returning trucks. A short time after that, Damon, Derek, Ray, Stacy, Ryan and Scott presented themselves to the three old geezers.

“Where did you people go?” Gary asked.

“Flagstaff, Dad,” Derek explained, “We needed more camo netting and some pipes to support the netting.”

“Any trouble?” Gary asked.

“No,” Ray replied, “Took what we needed, left money for it and came back here. Did you hear the speech on the radio?”

“We heard it,” Ron said, “But do you believe it?”

“I don’t know what to believe, Ron,” Ray admitted, “But it did sound to me like he was sending a personal message to some people I happen to know. I think if I were them, I’d take his advice.”

Ron gave Gar-Bear a rather strange look. Gary just shrugged his shoulders. They let the matter drop at that, Ron not wanting to reveal their previous activities and Gary not willing to reveal what he had told Ray. It also occurred to Gary that he hadn’t mentioned taking down the power grid to Ray, but Ray probably put 2 and 2 together.

02Jan11 through 09Jan11...

It took the people at the ranch a full week to install the netting, paint the fences and erase any sign of their existence. They had one problem that they didn’t know how to deal with. Situated, as it was, the camo’d barn blocked the view of the livestock. They had noticed from the rise that the animals seemed to vanish and then appear out of thin air when they came out from behind the barn. You couldn’t really see the fence, it had been painted too, but that barn was a dead giveaway. They decided that their only option was to go back to Flagstaff and buy some steel posts and barbed wire and fence in an area for the livestock well away from the barn.

Damon, Derek, Ray, Stacy, Ryan and Scott plus the three old men would make the trip. They armed themselves as befit the situation, with sniper rifles and MP5/10SD6s plus their favorite handguns. They would find out if the President was telling the truth or not, right now. When they arrived in Flagstaff, the cop motioned them right through the stop. They went to an open farm supply store and bought all the posts and wire they could haul and extra post drivers. People were out and about in Flagstaff, almost like before Thanksgiving. They went to every store where they’d ‘borrowed’ things and offered to pay for whatever they’d taken. The storeowners or managers, perhaps in shock, accepted the payments gratefully and told them to be sure and come back; all except one. Gary explained it to him.

“Look butthead, I didn’t have to come in here and offer to pay for what we took,” Gary explained, “I did and I’m willing to pay for exactly what we took and nothing else. The way I see it you can take my money or not, frankly, I don’t give a crap. You never know, we might just be the guys that the President was talking about. You know, the guys responsible for all that crap in 2005 and after. Maybe we need to blow your store up.”

Needless to say, the man took the money and never said a word to anyone else about the event. What the hell, he intended to file an insurance claim for everything that was taken anyway.

## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 23 – The Invisible Ranch

10Jan11 through 24Jan11...

They had no idea how large of an area they could fence in with the wire and fence posts they purchased. They divided the wire and posts in 4 piles of each and put in one row of posts. They got about ¼-mile before the posts ran out. They strung the wire and had more wire than posts. They talked it over and decided that the area was just too small and would make the livestock tend to bunch up. So, they got Damon and Derek and 2 of David's boys to take down the two strands of barbed wire around the section and to use the Ford tractor and loader to pull the steel posts from the fence around the original fenced section. Everyone who could work on the project was involved, but it took 15 days of very hard work and long days to fence in the southwest section and paint the fencing. The reward for their efforts was that the livestock didn't disappear anymore; that plus a lot of blisters and aching muscles.

The livestock, it should be noted, consisted of the horses and some cattle. There were no chickens or pigs, not this go around. Just having the horses and cattle was enough of a chore. They really had trouble hiding the radio antennas until someone got the bright idea to put up some telephone poles and string some camo netting. They still had netting available, but didn't have any telephone poles. On the other hand, they did have a chainsaw and they weren't that far from a stand of pine trees. I'm sure that Forrest Gump's Mama had a saying to cover this situation, but it doesn't occur to me. Anyway, they harvested some pines, removed the branches and dropped them into holes that they started with the posthole augur and deepened by hand. With the netting up, you couldn't see the antennas and the antennas didn't block the view of the livestock. It looked like they were set. NPR carried a Saturday morning address by Acting President Nelson and the military was doing its best to help the population.

Ryan wanted to report back to the Army to assist in protecting the country or whatever they would want him to do. This led to some long discussion and almost an argument or two, but in the end, Ray and Stacy persuaded Ryan that he would be serving his country just as much by staying at the ranch and aiding in the defense of the residents. Ryan was still debating the issue when near the first part of February, a group of stragglers showed up at the ranch. These were families and they weren't looking for trouble. But, they barely had anything to their names. They had been up at the Grand Canyon when the attack came and had stayed on until the food ran out at the motel. They had walked from the GC to the turn in road and had stopped for the night to rest and nibble at their meager rations.

As had become their habit, the three old geezers rode up to the highway each day, as much to occupy their time as anything else. They saw the group sitting around a small campfire dividing up the last of their food, a box of soda crackers. They didn't notice any weapons of any sort, either.

"Howdy folks," Gary said, "What brings you out in the middle of nowhere in this kind of

weather?”

“We didn’t mean to trespass mister,” one of the men said, “We couldn’t go any further last night and stopped to rest and eat. We’ll be on our way.”

“How do you happen to be here?” Ron asked kindly.

“We were up at the motel in Grand Canyon for Thanksgiving and just stayed after the attack,” the man said. “But they ran out of food so we took what they’d give us and started to hike down to Williams. They ran us out of that small burg up the road a ways with guns. If you could spare a little food, we can pay a little for it.”

Gary looked at Ron and Clarence who just nodded. He pulled a radio out of his saddlebag and radioed back to the ranch, telling them to bring two pickups and hurry.

“Well folks, the President said to help friends and neighbors who were less fortunate, so I expect we can get you warmed up and fed and get you to Williams later on if that’s where you want to go,” Gary remarked. “How come you’re on foot?”

“Well, there was a bus tour at the motel and one night some of those folks hotwired our cars and stole them,” the man explained.

“My name is Gary Olsen, the ugly one here is Ron Green and that handsome black fellow is Clarence Rawlings,” Gary introduced them. “This is our ranch.”

“My name is Jim Roland and my wife is Sammy and the kids are Jim, Jr. and Ryan. That guy there is Samuel Johnson and his wife is Mary. Their two girls are named Mary and Salina. The other fellow is Harry Olsen and his wife is Janet. Their kids are Charles and Jennie.”

“Nice to meet you folks, how would some hot food and a hot bath sound right about now?” Gary asked.

“About like we’d died and gone to Heaven,” Jim said.

About that time Ray and Scott pulled up in two of the pickups.

“You folks have any luggage?” Gary asked.

“Left it at the motel with the bellman,” Jim answered, “We didn’t figure we had the strength to haul it the 22 miles to Williams.”

“He give you any kind of claim checks or anything?” Gary asked.

“Yes,” Jim said, “Why?”



“We’ll send someone up to Grand Canyon for your luggage,” Gary replied. “Hop into the pickup folks and welcome to the Ranch.”

They men drove the pickups slowly to allow the horses to keep up. When they passed through the cyclone fence gate, the newcomers were surprised to see the camouflaged fence. They were even more surprised when they got to the actual ranch area.

“Is everything around here camouflaged?” Jim asked.

“We try to keep a low profile.” Gary remarked. “We’ll put you up in our shelter for tonight and figure out where to go after you’ve cleaned up and had something to eat.”

They dismounted the families and led them to the bomb shelter. Since even the entrance to the shelter was painted, they were very close to the shelter before they realized where they were going. They were led down the stairs and about died of surprise.

“Do you live in this shelter?” Jim asked.

“Only when the situation warrants,” Ron replied.

Gary picked up a phone and called his house. He asked Sharon to get Linda and Lucy and come to prepare a hot meal for their guests. Meanwhile he assigned each couple to a bedroom and pointed out the dormitory where the children could sleep. Clarence put on two pots of coffee to brew and Sharon, Linda and Lucy arrived to prepare a meal. The men got the folks some towels, soap and washcloths and showed them where a rack of used clothing was in the main storage shelter. They picked out clean clothes and the adults let the kids use the bathrooms first. When the kids were cleaned and dressed, the adults cleaned up themselves. Each of the bathrooms had a supply of razors, shaving cream and other necessities. The women threw together something quick like chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy and a vegetable. They set out a gallon carton of milk and put a pot of coffee on a warmer. They served the children and later the adults when they put in an appearance.

“Are there many other people up at Grand Canyon?” Gary asked.

“I don’t know,” Jim said, “The employees seemed to just disappear and I think we were the last three families, but I can’t be sure.”

Gary called Ray and asked him to come to the shelter.

“Ray, these folks walked here from the Grand Canyon,” Gary explained. “How about you take the 3 5-tons and two Hummers and check it out. They will give you the claim checks for their luggage. Maybe Scott, Damon, Derek, Ryan, Stacy and the 4 cousins should go along and go armed; we don’t want any trouble. If there are any more motel guests up there, bring them back, would you?”

Ray collected the claim checks, called the others on the phone and told them to come to the shelter and arm up. When they showed up, Ray unlocked the armory. They turned out a few minutes later wearing web gear, handguns and with a sniper rifle slung on one shoulder and an MP5 slung around their necks. Jim's eyes got as big as saucers.

"Would you mind if I asked what kind of a ranch this is?" he asked.

"Jim," Gary said, "I guess you'd call it a retirement ranch for survivalists. Why, do the guns bother you?"

"Not really Gary," Jim said, "But those people look like they're on their way to World War III. We're all veterans, so we're familiar with guns."

"Ever see any action?" Gary asked.

"We were all grunts in Desert Storm," Jim replied.

"Really?" Gary asked. "Where are you folks from?"

"Los Angeles," Jim replied quietly, "Or, at least we used to be. Based on news reports, our homes are all gone."

"California natives?" Gary asked.

"Nah, we were all raised in Waterloo, Iowa," Jim said

"Home of the Sullivan brothers," Gary commented casually.

"You know Iowa?" Jim asked.

"You know where Charles City is?" Gary asked back.

"Yeah. Are you from Charles City?" Jim asked, his eyes once again large.

"Graduated from high school there in 1961," Gary said, "And my wife is from Des Moines and Ottumwa."

"My two boys were born and raised in Iowa, too," Gary added.

"Ron has one daughter who lived in Austin." Gary continued.

"What did you do in California," Gary asked.

"Building trades," Jim replied. "You have one carpenter, one plumber and one electrician."

"No medics, huh?" Gary asked.

"Well Sammy is a surgical nurse and Mary is a LPN," Jim replied. "Plus Janet is a paramedic. Why?"

"You wouldn't consider retiring to Arizona would you?" Gary asked.

"Never gave it much thought, Gary," Jim admitted.

"Well now, there would be a free home, furnishings and \$750 a week, tax free wages, in it for each family," Gary said, "And the corporation buys all of the food and utilities are free. Might even be able to come up with three diesel pickup as a signing bonus."

"We can talk it over, Gary, but I won't promise anything," Jim said.

"I'm not one who says please very often Jim, but please do that," Gary replied.

Neither was Gary one who actually prayed much, but on that particular night, he talked out loud to God. "You know Lord, I'm not one to pray very much, and this might be selfish. But Lord, we have this young man among us with mixed feelings about whether to stay and help us or go and help the country. I wish he would stay and help out Lord, but I don't know if that is the right thing or I'm just being selfish. You probably do know Lord so whatever he should do; please help him to make a decision, one way or the other.

"And, another thing Lord, three families happened to come by today and we did what any decent person would do and gave them some hot food and a place to sleep. I also offered jobs Lord and homes and such, but you know all that don't you? Maybe you brought them to our door, I don't know. I do know that they have some skills this little community could sure use. Anyway Lord, maybe I offered enough and maybe I didn't, I don't know. But we could sure use their help Lord I do know that. Anyway, if you might happen to agree and if you could see your way clear to helping those folks to decide, I'd be grateful. You know about these things better than I do Lord so whatever you have them decide is the way it's supposed to be, I suppose. Anyway Lord, I didn't want you up there thinking that I never gave you any thought. So thanks for listening and thanks for your time. Amen."

25Jan11...

It was the strangest thing, but that morning, Ryan announced that he had decided to stay with them there at the ranch. He didn't know why, maybe it was just because he'd finally met someone else named Ryan, but he was staying. And Jim said the three families had talked it over and had decided to take Gary up on the offer for the time being at least. They didn't have homes to go back to and the idea of having a new home and furnishings did appeal to them. And \$750 a week, even tax free, was a little less than they were accustomed to but with the food tossed in and no utilities to pay and transportation being part of the deal, it just seemed to them to be the right thing to do. Besides,

this seemed like a pretty decent bunch of folks of to them, taking them in and all and asking nothing in return except to consider staying on and lending a hand. They were willing to stay.

## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 24 – Promises to Keep

Well sir, he'd gone and opened his mouth and now he had to keep his word. Gary, Ron and Clarence got Ray and Scott and Ryan to take them down to Flagstaff to the mobile home dealer who was back open for business. Gary told the dealer that they sure did need 4 new homes up there at the ranch in the worst way. And, by the way, were he and the dealer square on the triplewide they'd helped themselves to during the emergency? The dealer told him they were close enough, he supposed and he'd make any adjustments in the prices of the new homes.

He could only provide them with 4 new doublewides, but he could install them. This was going to need to be a cash transaction due to the times, but if Gary had the cash, they had a deal at \$70 thousand per home installed. Well sir, Gary counted out \$300 thousand on the spot and told him that they need basements for the homes and had one home at the ranch, that triple wide they'd taken, that also needed a basement. The triple wide needed to be disassembled, moved to the new basement and reassembled, by the way. It was a bit of an inconvenience for Scott and Susan, but getting a basement was worth the inconvenience. And Ryan had his own home.

It also cleaned out the dealer in Flagstaff. He only had the 4 display doublewides on hand. There was no telling when he would be able to get more homes from the manufacturers. He towed the homes to the ranch. If someone hadn't been waiting by the highway, his men would have missed the turnoff. And when they got back to Flagstaff they told him that unless you knew where the homes already there were located, you could easily miss them or drive right into one. The dealer had to drive up to the ranch and see this for himself. He must have drove past the turnoff 3 times before he noticed the truck tracks. And found the turn-in. He didn't see the cyclone fence until he was nearly on top of it and all he could see down at the ranch area was the four homes waiting to be assembled. The folks there at the ranch had staked out where they wanted the new basements and when he left to go back to Flagstaff, he asked Gary to be sure and have someone at the road the next morning for the construction crews.

Although Ryan had agreed to stay, the boy had a burr under his saddle. Ryan, it seems, had a girlfriend. Her name was Jennifer and she was originally from Jackson too. Jennifer and he had gone to college together and she had continued to Medical school. She had graduated, completed her internship and because she had started med school during her 4th year of college, had completed her residency. The last Ryan had heard from her just before he gone on leave, she was working with another doctor on a reservation over in western New Mexico. Jennifer was beautiful and bright and had completed an 11 year program in just 9 years. They were engaged to be married when Ryan finished Ranger's school. Ryan explained his problem to Ray and Ray took it to the three geezers.

"Well, I guess we're going to go after Ryan's fiancée," Ron said.

“Ray, that old Ford of yours might be a keepsake, but you’re going to need some decent wheels to make the trip to New Mexico,” Gary suggested. “We’ll send two Hummers for escort and Ryan and you can take one or two of the Dodges to haul her things back.”

“According to Ryan, she doesn’t have much, so one pickup ought to be enough,” Ray replied.

“Ok, then just take one, but you’d better take extra fuel for the Hummer’s,” Gary said, “Even with the auxiliary tanks, they have limited range. Fill up all of the vehicles from the trailer and see how much fuel that leaves you. A couple of hundred gallons ought to be more than plenty. And, if you can find a judge or preacher, you’d better get them properly married. Stacy will want to go along I assume, so you can make it a double ceremony. The Comanche wedding was nice, but you need the papers.”

Scott and Susan, Ray, Stacy and Ryan plus the cousins left the next morning for New Mexico. The geezers got the contractor to take advantage of their absence and they got the basements completed for Ryan’s home and Scott and Susan’s home first. The dealer had one crew assembling Ryan’s house and another disassembling Scott’s. A week later, both homes were up and two of the other three were nearly complete. It was nice to have a real plumber, carpenter and electrician to properly hook the new homes into the utilities. And it was all about right on time too. The folks showed up back at the ranch. Ray and Stacy had made it legal, just in case, and Ryan was pleased to introduce the folks to his new bride, Jennifer.

Since Ryan and Jennifer needed furniture, as did, Jim, Sam, Harry and their families, it was the proper time to make a trip back to Flagstaff. First stop was the Dodge dealer where the three newcomers picked out pickups to suit them, diesels of course. The three old geezers insisted that Ray and Ryan do the same. They went back to the furniture store they favored and let everyone pick out new furniture. They loaded the furniture on to the 3 5-ton trucks and 5 pickups. No one seemed to give their submachine guns a second glance. Of course, you have to remember this was Arizona, not New York.

The good Lord sure must have listened to that prayer of Gary’s. Not only did they have 2 nurses and a paramedic, they had a doctor. Jennifer was concerned about leaving the tribes she had been helping in New Mexico, but the old men pointed out that there were several reservations in the area that would probably welcome her visits. She perked right up at that and Gar-Bear said he would do what he could to help her with drugs and supplies.

14Feb11...

Gary could not get past St. Valentine’s Day without dwelling on what happened to General Clark. He just plain got angry every time he thought about what Marshall Thomas had confirmed. Even a traitor deserved better than what Clark had gotten. There was a big difference between a firing squad and a bullet to the back of the head, at least to his

way of thinking. Jennifer had made up a list of drugs and supplies she wanted and Gary wanted to visit a gun store in Flagstaff to scratch an itch. So, the three men rode to town with the kids and they ordered the supplies. Then, they stopped by the gun store. Gary had it in mind that it sure would be handy to have a little short-barreled shotgun to haul around with them when they went riding. He was looking for Remington model 11-87 shotguns, but not the 14" models, rather the 12" model with pistol grips. He got what he wanted, one of each of them. He still had a lot of the 2¾" 12-pellet 00 Buckshot.

As it was, the guys sort of looked like a mobile armory when they went riding. They wore their Vaqueros on their sides, had the Winchester in a scabbard and a MP5 hanging from the saddle horn. Where were they going to carry a shotgun, even a little short shotgun with as 12" barrel? In a canvas bag with a loop to hang over the saddle horn, it turned out. Jim, Sam, Harry were accustomed to the M16's from their days in the service but the general rule was that each family needed one MBR. So, they tagged an M1A, an M16, an MP5 and wore a 10mm pistol to honor the policy to be armed at all times.

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America's allies were raising hell in the UN, but their protests were falling on deaf ears. Things had changed over the years and America really had only one major ally, the United Kingdom. Ever since the war with Iraq, the US and France and Germany had been at odds and Russia only liked the US when they needed something. At the moment the US had nothing to offer anyone. While the US Navy was still the mightiest sea power in the world, all those ships sitting in American ports did little to influence events around the world. The only Naval vessels at sea were five boomers and a few attack submarines.

Acting President Nelson was going out of his way to keep his word, up to a point. Edwards was demanding that he was 'ready to govern' but the cabinet liked what they had in Nelson and were afraid that if Edwards were returned to power, everything being done to rebuild America would fizzle to a stop. While not everyone agreed with the Floridian's approach on gun control, they all had to admit that crime was at an all-time low. Rumor had it that people who had taken things during the emergency were even returning to the very stores they had looted and paid for the merchandise they had taken. But, that was probably just a rumor. Anyway, it wasn't strictly up to Nelson to decide, but the Congress and they were nowhere near the 2/3s majority required to return Edwards to power. It was akin to a mental hospital. The doctors, not the patients, decide when release is appropriate.

01Mar11...

To avoid creating a clear path to the ranch on account of Jennifer's coming and goings to the reservations, the men decided that Ryan would drive her cross-country for a substantial distance before entering the highway. Ryan varied his route, almost never approaching the road from the same point twice. There were lots of folks on the reserva-

tion who needed Jennifer's help, especially with electricity out and the cold weather. One of the first things she did was to vaccinate everyone to make sure they didn't pick up a deadly illness for drinking tainted water. Then, there were the usual assortment of aches and pains and colds and flu, with an occasional broken bone. Everyone on the ranch was especially careful. They seemed unaccustomed to having all of that medical talent available and did everything with forethought and caution.

The vessels the Chinese had leased had finally accumulated to the point where they could begin to load their forces for the invasion of the United States. They planned to sail north to the Bering Sea and southward to the US. They did not have much of a Navy, but had in fact concentrated on building a large fleet of submarines. They had bought and built, under license, a large fleet of the Paltus, or Kilo export class submarines. Conventionally powered, the submarines had the advantage of stealth when operating on the electric motors. And, they planned to hover close to the larger ships when they needed to surface and recharge their batteries. The equipment was being loaded and when completed, the People's Liberation Army would board and come to America. Their intelligence showed that the Americans were primarily concentrated along the California coast. The American intelligence showed the ships being loaded. Concerned that the Chinese had not expended their full load of nuclear weapons, Acting President Nelson opted out of a nuclear attack and instead sent the US attack submarines racing towards China. They stated object was to disable or destroy as many of the enemy vessels as possible.

02Mar11...9pm EST...

*My Fellow Americans,*

*I come to you tonight with a message of the gravest importance. Our intelligence assets have disclosed that the People's Republic of China is indeed intent on invading this country. Even as I speak, the Chinese are loading their vessels with equipment and matériel to wage a war against this great nation. The moment we feared appears to be at hand.*

*Inasmuch as the PRC still may have weapons of mass destruction, I have opted to avoid their use. I have dispatched our naval forces to halt this invasion, if possible. In the unlikely event that the PRC forces slip past our forces, the United States military will move to repel the invasion. To this end, I am dispatching 3 Divisions of the 5 Divisions currently assisting in the cleanup to the west coast. In the event that it becomes necessary, the 2 remaining Divisions and the National Guard will also be moved to the west coast.*

*President Edwards remains, in the opinion of the Congress, unable to resume office at this time. I shall therefore do my utmost to lead this nation in its hour of need. Many of you have taken advantage of the temporary removal of restrictions on firearms and have armed yourselves. This may account for the sharp reduction in crime the country is experiencing. However, with privilege comes responsibility. It may become necessary*



*for many of you to join in with our military forces in repelling the Chinese should it come to that.*

*Effective immediately, announcements will be made on NPR at 6 hour intervals, commencing at midnight EST tonight, keeping you apprised of this developing situation.*

*There is one other item that I would like to mention. To the group that I spoke of earlier, I would address the following comments. I can assume that you are patriotic Americans concerned with the state of your nation. Whoever you are, it's time to get out your fire-arms and lock and load. Whatever your previous motives, your country needs you now. I have executed a blanket Presidential Pardon for all individual involved. If you will come forward and identify yourselves to the nearest military authority, you will be provided with documents verifying your Pardons and any arms and munitions you may need or desire. If you have any questions Gary, Ron or Clarence, contact me.*

*God Bless America and God Bless the American People.*

*Thank you and good night.*

“Do you think he means us Gary?” Clarence asked.

“Well, he sure as hell wasn't speaking to the Pep Boys now was he?” Gary huffed. “I wonder how long he's known and who told him?”

“I can't tell you how long he's known partner,” Ron said, “But I'd bet my bottom dollar that Marshal Marshall is behind those comments.”

## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 25 – General Green?

Don't ever play poker with Ronald, you'd lose. Marshall Thomas was no longer a Deputy US Marshal; he was a full US Marshal. However, in exchange for revealing the identities of the men to Nelson, he had extracted the pardons for the men, in advance. The Acting President had sent the message the only way he knew how because no one at Moon Shadows knew exactly where the men had gone. Those that did know were already at the ranch. Contrary to the opinions of some, Gary knew exactly what he was doing when he'd revealed the secrets to Ray. Only a failing memory had caused him to not mention the downing of the power lines. Ray had passed the test.

The three of them talked it over for quite a spell and then decided that since Nelson had been on the up and up to this point, they might as well go see the Army down in Flagstaff and get those pardons. Nelson had said they could have anything they needed or desired and they desired a lot of things though they needed little. Derek could have his Abrams tanks back and maybe they could get a couple of those M109A6 self-propelled artillery things; or, maybe some smaller 105mm guns. Nah, the tanks had 120mm cannons, they were small enough. They were low on AT-4s so they'd ask for some of them plus maybe a few dozen of the LAW rockets to haul around on their horses.

Why buy camo netting when the Army bought it by the truckload? Those Chinese guys probably had tanks, so they'd better stock up on TOW missiles, too. And those Stingers worked pretty well, so a few dozen of them might be in order. They had all the 40mm grenades they could use, but they only had a couple of dozen of the M67's apiece, better get some of those; and, a guy could never have too many Claymores, now could he?

They didn't have anything that qualified as a light machinegun, did you suppose the Army had any BAR's and any Tommy guns around? And, rather than get more Hummers with Mk-19's or Ma-Deuces, why not just get a couple of those M1117 ASC's that mounted a Mk-19, a Ma-Deuce and came with an M-249 SAW? They got the pardons and almost everything on the list. The only BAR's still around were in museums and the service model Tommy guns only used the box magazines, so they passed on them. The SAWs were replaced with M240s, 'cause they really worked.

The Army offered to erect a few Quonset huts to hold the munitions and to add the camo netting. From the way the Army treated them one would have thought that they were Batman, Superman and the Incredible Hulk. The Army promoted Ryan to 1st Lieutenant and made him their liaison officer. That way he got to stay home with Jennifer and be on active duty at the same time. They were in tall cotton. However, sooner or later you end up having to pay the piper.

Gary said that everything was Ron's fault and they made Ron a General and Clarence and he Bird Colonels, Gary ought to learn to stop passing the buck. They figured out that they could tie a LAW rocket on the saddle like a bedroll and they went riding every day, armed for anyone stupid enough to come along. One can relate a set of events humorously or stick to the cold hard facts. Humor is good – it is disarming. C-4 isn't, it's

explosive. And, they hadn't forgotten to replenish their stores of explosives.

They declined the Army's offer to erect the huts; they didn't want the Army to know where they lived. It just sounded too good to be true. The Army offered a squad of instructors to teach them how to use all of the equipment. Let's face it, you don't just put a round in a 155mm gun and toss in a couple of bags of powder and hope you hit the target. They accepted the training, but insisted that they receive it at Camp Navajo rather than the instructors coming to the ranch. Most of the equipment they asked for was to provide for the defenses of the ranch. If they indeed had to face the Chinese, it would be on their terms, not the terms of either the American or Chinese Army's. Even that pill that Gary took that partially overcame his neuropathy only went so far. His hands and feet were a little better, but that's all.

Ron reminded Gary of something he'd said over and over during the 'Tony time', if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. After hearing numerous of Nelson's speeches, Ron began referring to him as 'Slick Willy, Jr.'. He went along with accepting the pardons and getting the military equipment, but he flat out told everyone that if they revealed the location of the ranch to the Army, he'd personally plant them 6' deep. The Army was also generous when it came to medical supplies and Jennifer took 3 5-ton truckloads. They erected their own Quonset huts and camouflaged them all by themselves. Derek inspected the Abrams closely, bowing to Ron's attitude and removed a new piece of equipment with which he was unfamiliar. Only then did he accept the tanks. They found similar devices in the M1117's and removed them.

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Satellites revealed that the Chinese ships began sailing on March 10, 2011. They did not reveal the submarines that only surfaced at night in the shadows of the large ships. The American fast attack submarines only caught up with the Chinese after they sailed. Those Kilo class boats the Chinese had were just plain impossible to hear when they sailed along at 4 knots. There were as many Chinese submarines as American 688i class boats. Every time the Americans sunk another ship, they lost another LA class sub to a wire guided Chinese torpedo. After a single day's engagement, the American sub commanders thought better of their approach and withdrew to find a better approach. They had sunk some of the Kilo's, but a one for one tradeoff wasn't in the American's best interest.

The sub commanders were instructed to back off. The US carriers would meet the Chinese head on and the US would attempt to stop them that way. Since it appeared that the Chinese were taking a polar route, Nelson also ordered aircraft to the Alaskan air bases that remained. The Chinese may not have had a battle fleet, but that didn't mean that they couldn't mount weapons on the transport ships. And for the past several years, the weapons of choice for many militaries, including the Chinese, were missiles of various varieties. The missiles didn't know that they weren't being fired from a Frigate or Destroyer or Cruiser. They just went where they were aimed. The Americans only stealth fighter was the F-22 Raptor. The F-117 Fighter was a bomber, the same as the

B-2. Somewhere along the line the Joint Strike Fighter program got stalled. And, the F-22's and F-117's were land-based aircraft, not carrier aircraft. And, keep in mind, the F-117 only carries 2 bombs. They were reassembled up at Groom Lake and ready to fly.

China had announced a cut in its Army of up to ½ million in 2003. They used the wrong symbol; it wasn't a minus, but a plus. Instead of going down to 2 million, they went up to 3 million. In accordance with provisions in the Military Service Law of the PRC, male citizens from 18 to 35 years of age who are fit for military service, excluding those enlisted for active service, shall be regimented into militia units to perform reserve service. The militia has two categories: the primary and the ordinary. A selected group of militiamen under the age of 28, including soldiers discharged from active service and other persons who have received or are selected for military training, are regimented into the primary militia; other male citizens belonging to the age group of 18 to 35, who are qualified for reserve service are regimented into the ordinary militia. The primary militia may recruit female citizens when necessary. Now, assuming that 600 million plus Chinese survived, how big would that PLA (People Liberation Army-the reserve or militia) be? More than a few, that's for sure. They had more soldiers than they had equipment or room on the ships.

The Chinese also built any number of fighter aircraft, usually licensed or modified version of Russian aircraft. The Yak-38 Forger and the Yak-141 Freestyle became particularly popular with the Chinese. They were s/vtol aircraft and did not require a carrier. The Yak-38 was a lot like the Harrier. The fleet, though it wasn't big enough to haul all of China's millions of soldiers was rather large and every ship had a minimum of one and sometimes two of the s/vtol aircraft. The Russians had basically abandoned the Yak-141 in the mid 1990's but Boris Yeltsin licensed the aircraft to raise funds for the Russian Republic. Check it out; it's all out there on the net to read about.

But, the American pilots are better trained than the Chinese pilots, right? Sure they are, ask any American pilot. And we all know that every aircraft lost in Korea and Viet Nam was due to flack or a SAM's, right? Throughout the 1990's and the 2000's the Chinese were steadily building their forces and training their pilots. Maybe they called their schools 'bottom gun' and 'blue flag', but they had them. The principal problem with the Russian and Chinese air forces had been the insistence that the aircraft be controlled from the ground. But then, Hollywood made Top Gun and explained how one should train their pilots. I don't know if the Chinese like popcorn, but they sure liked that movie.

It wasn't as if China didn't warn the US. On July 23, 2004 one of the news channels, either FOX or CNN, carried a story about the Chinese warning the US about further arming of Taiwan. Or, maybe the TV reporters got it wrong back in 2004. A vast force of several thousand ships had departed China. The attack subs took out several, including tankers. An army may travel on its stomach but the vehicles eat fuel and every tanker lost meant that the Chinese would have to locate alternate fuel supplies once they got to the US. The missile attacks had successfully taken out several west coast refineries and the pipeline terminals didn't all go to the coast. When it became evident that the invasion was inevitable, the Army cut off those pipelines.

The missions flown out of Alaska had mixed results. The F-117's were fairly successful but then the US fleet of F-117's was never very large, something on the order of 60 aircraft. The B-2's were also employed, but there were far fewer of them. The Chinese SAM's effectively kept most of the F-15's and other aircraft at arm's length. The overall effect was that more than 75% of the Chinese fleet made it to the US. During WW II, the Germans had expectations of where the invasion would come. The American had similar expectations in 2011, but the Chinese had been reading the Americans plans and landed where it best suited them, further north.

Fortunately the last 2 Divisions and the guard were easily diverted to the Pacific Northwest. The remaining Divisions shifted only a portion of their forces, assuming the Chinese would continue along the entire coast, invading at the easiest landing spots. In the cases where the Americans guessed correctly the armor and artillery essentially stopped the invasion cold. Where the estimates were incorrect, America was forced to rely on its air forces. In this instance the Chinese Yak 38's and Yak-141's, though not as capable as the F/A-18's, F-15s, F-16's and F-22's, had at least equal numbers and pilots who were capable of pushing their aircraft to the edge of their envelopes.

Expecting an easy victory the Americans were surprised at the abilities of the Chinese. It was clearly a case of the enemy being prepared far in advance and having devoted nearly their entire national resource base to the task. In the long haul, one should expect that the US would prevail, but the Chinese also outnumbered the US Army and their latest equipment was surprisingly good. The major shortcoming in the enemy's plan was their serious underestimation of the attitude of the American population as a whole. In this, the Acting President had been correct. The individual militias rose to the challenge.

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In the state of Washington, the Chinese landed 3-armored Divisions and 5-infantry Divisions. These forces were supported by nearly 500 aircraft. In opposition, the US had the 2 Army Divisions, which included 2 armored Regiments. The National Guard supplied 2 additional Divisions, which included 2 additional armored Regiments. The Army was supported by nearly 100 attack helicopters and about 400 fighters and bombers. Additional support came from a carrier task group lying about 150 miles offshore and included 90 aircraft. The 101st Air Cavalry was airlifted to further support the US forces. The Chinese had the advantage of numbers, but the Americans had the advantage of fighting on their home turf.

To the south, along the Oregon coast, the Chinese fielded 2-armored Divisions and 5-infantry Divisions. The Americans responded by shifting 3-armored Regiments and 3-infantry Divisions plus an unknown number of attack helicopters and a squadron of A-10 aircraft in addition to about 300 fighters and bombers. The advantages were about the same. The Americans had been right in their assessment that the enemy would field a large force along the California coast, and all the remaining armor, infantry and US air-

craft were available to defend California. Faced by superior numbers of forces on all fronts, the US used its greatest asset, its aircraft. The Chinese had anticipated this tactic and their forces were well equipped with large supplies of SAM's. The Chinese were being hurt, but the USAF was losing too many planes.

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The small boxes lay on the ground right where Derek had left them. A sergeant finally noticed them and reported the find to his superior. The Lieutenant told him to put the locator beacons back in supply. Up at the ranch, they did things differently too. They erected the camo netting before they moved in the equipment or erected the huts. They also left a couple of men armed with M107s on 180 just north of Williams in case they were followed. They weren't, the Army had been counting on technology to locate them. But, the Army was betrayed by the very people they were 'helping'. The locator beacons never left Flagstaff and aircraft over flights of the region failed to disclose the Quonset huts being erected. Derek even removed the communication sets from the 2 tanks and 2 ASC's and replaced them with 2-meter radios.

Interesting enough, the Presidential Pardons were general in nature, specifying no particular acts for which they were being pardoned. The way Gary read them, the pardons simply forgave them, legally, for everything they'd done that violated the laws up to 01Mar11. Ron tossed the tin stars in the trash, muttering, "I ain't no General." The eagles followed, they were friends, not a General and his staff.

Ryan put the radio the Army had given him in the radio shack and they installed and hooked up the antenna. However, he had no intention of using the unit for anything more than listening. His commission had been changed, by the way, from that of a reserve officer to a regular officer.

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*America loves a winner, and will not tolerate a loser, this is why America has never, and will never, lose a war. It's the unconquerable soul of man, not the nature of the weapon he uses that insures victory. Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity. [Patton, on two different occasions.]*

Faced with a superior force and unable to defeat the invading hoard, the Americans suddenly withdrew. The Chinese, sensing victory, pursued the Americans. When the Chinese were sufficiently strung out, the US forces, aided by local militia, cut off the long Chinese columns and attacked from the shadows. The tide slowly began to turn. Lessons from over 200 years before were remembered and the entire US military resorted to guerilla tactics. The Warhogs and Apaches were much more effective this time and the Chinese lost large numbers of armor and infantry.

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“The way I see it,” Ron offered, “Is that we aren’t a big enough force, even with all of those fancy weapons we have, to do much more than defend this part of the area. I say we just stay tucked in right here on the ranch and bottle up the highway.”

“Yeah,” Clarence agreed.

“I’m just tired Ron,” Gary said, “It suits me just fine. We don’t even have to move an inch. Those 155mm canons will stop anything on the highway. I suppose that it wouldn’t hurt to register them. That’s what they called it wasn’t it? Registering the fire.”

“I think so,” Ron said, “But that will pretty much destroy the highway won’t it?”

“So?” Gary asked, “We can drive around if we have to. What do you think Ray?”

“I think we could plant some of those anti-tank mines in the desert in case anyone tries to bypass the road,” Ray suggested.

## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 26 – True Colors

15May11...

*American forces succeeded in halting the Chinese advances on several fronts today, the announcer droned on, Taking advantage of the Sierra Nevada range, forces stalled the Chinese advance. In Oregon and Washington, the Cascade Range has proven to be an even greater obstacle to the invading forces. B-1B bombers carrying large loads of conventional explosives were responsible for wiping out what some estimate to be as much as 2 Divisions of enemy forces and their armor units.*

*One item of local interest. Having accepted President Nelson's pardons, and a large store of weapons, munitions and supplies, the infamous leaders of the Palmdale Militia, Gary Olsen, Ronald Green and Clarence Rawlings, have apparently disappeared. The men, who were responsible for many questionable activities during 2005 and beyond, accepted their pardons from the Army in Flagstaff. They are therefore believed to be located somewhere in the western Arizona or eastern California area.*

*At Mt. Weather today, President Nelson reported that President Edwards suffered a heart attack and, despite heroic efforts to revive him, died. There is no word on who President Nelson will appoint as his Vice President. In view of the ongoing war on the west coast, President Nelson indicated that President Edward's body would be interred in North Carolina without the usual pomp and circumstance. President Nelson also noted that due to the ongoing emergency, food rationing would be implemented.*

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"Infamous, huh?" Ron laughed, "We'll at least we have a title."

"Yeah well, Edwards was the picture of health, too," Gary said. "A heart attack? I don't believe that for one by God moment."

"How do you know that Gar-Bear?" Ron asked, "No one has seen hide or hair of the man since last Thanksgiving."

"Looked pretty good on TV just before Thanksgiving," Gary retorted.

"I wish we had the rest of the Palmdale Militia here to help us out," Clarence mused.

"Maybe we should go get them," Gary said.

"Where?" Ron asked.

"If you where them, where would you be?" Gary asked.

"The Underground City?" Ron hesitantly suggested.



“Yeah Ron, that’s where I would be,” Clarence agreed.

“Well, it’s easy enough to find out,” Gary said, “We can send Ryan and Derek to find out. And another thing, we ought to repair that highway; I don’t believe they have any idea where we are.”

“Hell Gary,” Ron said, “There’s all sort of people in Flagstaff who know where the ranch is.”

“True, but they don’t know who we are,” Gary replied. “And even if they do, with our reputation for killing people we disagree with, who would be foolish enough to say anything?”

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Not only were the 46 other members of the Palmdale Militia at the Underground City, several of the residents of Moon Shadows had joined them. Chris and Patti were there as was Dick and his family. Even Jan and her kids had tagged along. They couldn’t stay in Palmdale; they didn’t have lights or gas. And, although the fallout hadn’t affected Palmdale, there was nothing to stand between them and the Chinese when they attacked, so they bugged out. Some of the lessons the three old geezers had taught had stuck. They were well equipped with weapons, ammo and food. They even had a few of the 12kw and 15kw generators.

Derek called back to Arizona on Dick’s Ham radio and told them to erect a large cover from the camo netting, the Palmdale Militia would there in a week. In Arizona, the three old geezers were delighted with the news. They had a whole Quonset hut full of camo netting and another 2 full of more hut components. Everyone got busy erecting the netting and assembling the huts. With the huts emptied of the netting and hut components, they soon had 12 huts available to provide housing for the militia. They also had a large area covered over to conceal the vehicles.

“Here’s the deal Roy,” Derek explained. “We’re going to Williams, Arizona and turn north on 180. If anything should happen to Ryan and me, go north on 180 until you spot a place in the highway that has been repaired but not blacktopped. Stop there and honk your horns a few times. Whatever you do, don’t get off the road. The area is pretty well seeded with anti-tank mines.”

“Those three old farts still running the show?” Roy asked.

“Pretty much, yes,” Derek replied, “But they have some help now from Ryan’s stepfather. He’s a 30-year Army veteran. And, we have a full medical staff with a doctor and nurses. Plus, they milked the Army for all it was worth when Nelson gave them those pardons. We’ve got tanks, artillery, food and medical supplies to last us for years.”

“Out raising hell are they?” Roy asked.

“They are tucked away and aren’t doing a thing this time,” Derek explain,” I guess they’re getting old.”

Wrong, Derek, they simply hadn’t had the forces to do much. And, it’s time for a nose count. Ron, Gary & Clarence=3; the cousins=7; Damon and Derek=9; Ray, Stacy, Scott and Ryan=13; John and Kevin=14, Kevin wasn’t worth a crap; David and his boys=19; Ron’s 3 son-in-laws=22; Jim, Sam and Harry=25; the Palmdale Militia added 46, making it 71; Chris, Matt and Dick=74. You could add Susan and Jan to the total, making it 76. The regrouped Palmdale Militia was up by 25 members. But, they weren’t the Palmdale Militia anymore, were they? They were the PFLA. No, those days were behind them too. The group needed a new title, you know, something catchy. They narrowed down to 2 choices, *The Spirit of ‘76* and *Nelson’s Nationals*. They opted for the latter, even though the former was catchier; Nelson had made it all possible and if anyone were to get the credit, it ought to be the President.

Of course the Army had insisted that they take lots of ammo, so it was put to good use, and everyone spent long hours on the range. Ryan was proving to be the best shot; he just sort of took to it naturally. The war seemed to be doing just fine without them, too. The US forces were slowly, but steadily defeating the Chinese. The Air Forces were slowly recapturing their kill ratio and it was finally up to 11 to 1. Those Chinese tanks were pretty good but the Abrams was proving that it was still the best tank in the world. The ASW forces were brought to bear and those Kilo class submarines the Chinese had were being eliminated. Harpoon anti-ship missiles were eliminating the ships the Chinese used to get to the US and as had been suggested, the US was winning.

The local militias that had lent the Army a hand in the worst days began to return home; proud of the role they’d taken in stopping the Chinese. With the military operations reduced to mopping up pockets of resistance, President Nelson made another speech on the radio.

*My Fellow Americans,*

*The Chinese are all but defeated. In the next few days, I believe that this war will be won. I wish to thank the militia groups who aided our military in its hour of need.*

*In view of the apparent victory, I am rescinding my Order pertaining to the firearms laws. Effective immediately, all unregistered firearms and devices listed under the NFA must be surrendered. I will ask Congress to reinstate all firearm laws up to and including the assault weapons ban.*

*I regret that it will be necessary to continue food rationing, but low supplies of fuel have prevented farmers from planting and harvesting their crops. And due to those fuel shortages, it will be necessary to temporarily restrict travel to within 50 miles of your homes.*

*In view of the actions of the Chinese, it is obvious to me that this country needs the provisions of the USA Patriot Act and I will request that Congress readopt the USA Patriot Act and strengthen its provisions.*

*Finally, I pardoned Gary Olsen, Ronal Green and Clarence Rawlings. I cannot undo that pardon. However, these men failed to come to the aid of their country. They have, in fact, disappeared. I am sending US Marshal Marshall Thomas to find and arrest these men. They are in possession of weapons and materials strictly prohibited by the NFA and as such are felons. You should discount reports that these individuals are doing nothing but good works.*

*Thank you and goodnight.*

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“There you go Gar-Bear,” Ron laughed, “You went and made us criminals.”

“Do you still believe that Edwards died of a heart attack?” Gary asked. “Are you still going to vote for this guy, Ronald? He’s just another Democrat and he has a taste of power. I guess we’re going to have to send him a message. Where is Mt. Weather, anyway?”

“It’s in Bluemont, Virginia Gary,” Ray replied, “Mount Weather is the self-sustaining underground command center for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The facility is the operational center – the hub – of approximately 100 other Federal Relocation Centers, most of which are concentrated in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina. Together this network of underground facilities constitutes the backbone of America’s ‘Continuity of Government’ program. In the event of nuclear war, declaration of martial law, or other national emergency, the President, his cabinet and the rest of the Executive Branch would be ‘relocated’ to Mount Weather.”

“Where the hell is Bluemont, Virginia?” Gary asked.

“It is 46 miles from Washington DC,” Ray answered.

“And what do they do there besides hide out?” Gary continued.

“Well, they collect data on American citizens, store information and play war games,” Ray explained. “They also do civil crisis management and maintain and update the ‘survivors list’.”

“You seem to be pretty well informed,” Gary responded.

“I use the Internet, too Gary,” Ray laughed.

“The bottom line here is that FEMA is behind the whole thing, right?” Gary asked.

“That’s the bottom line Gar-Bear,” Ray agreed.

“We know how to deal with FEMA, don’t we guys?” Gary chuckled. “I expect that we’d better start now before they turn those Red Cross voluntary centers into prisons. I am putting a \$100 bounty on the heads of all them FEMA people.”

“A \$100 isn’t much,” Ron said.

“Well, then you’ll just have to kill a lot of them to make it pay, won’t you Ronald McDonald?” Gary replied.

“FEMA is part of the Department of Homeland Security now so you’re going to be taking on the whole federal government Gary,” Ray pointed out. “But they published their response plan on the Internet. It’s funny what you said about the Red Cross; they’re right in the thick of things. You really should read the response plan.”

“Oh, really?” Gary responded, surprised. “Probably got the news media involved, too.”

“Actually, I have no idea,” Ray said, “But why doesn’t the public know more about FEMA and Mt. Weather? Did you ever wonder about that?”

“Did anyone ever see that Mel Gibson movie, *Conspiracy Theory*?” Gary asked. “It was interesting. Gibson played a guy named Jerry Fletcher who was in love with a woman he observed from afar. She worked for the government. Fletcher was an outspoken critic of that government. He had conspiracy theories for everything, from aliens to political assassinations. One of his theories was accurate and some dangerous people wanted him dead. Maybe that’s what we have here, one giant conspiracy.”

“I think you’ve been watching too many movies Gar-Bear,” Ron laughed.

“Yeah, like Predator vs. Alien?” Gary asked.

“That was a good comedy,” Ron protested. “Never laughed so hard in my life. But your girlfriend wasn’t in it, so I can see why you didn’t watch it.”

“Does Sigourney Weaver even own a bra?” Clarence asked.

## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 27 – Nelson’s Nationals

“34B-24-35,” Gary replied, “I use the Internet, too.

15Jun11...

Yep, they were the same crazy SOB’s he remembered, Roy admitted to himself. They had the 2 Abrams back all right and a couple of those self-propelled arty pieces. And, while you couldn’t see the place, how had they managed to deal with the heat signatures? Gary probably had rigged something to cool off the houses chimneys like he’d cooled off the pickups, he figured. Better living through technology.

“Well guys, the war is over,” Gary announced, “It’s time to stir things up.”

“I figure we’d better get Marshal Marshall before he gets us,” Gary suggested. “Guess we’ll start in Flagstaff.”

“Gun him down in the street,” Ron proposed, “Make our reputation bigger and badder and send a message to all of those folks who know where we live.”

“Anyone one have a legitimate idea?” Gary asked.

“Actually, Ron’s idea isn’t all that bad,” Roy suggested. “You’d have people afraid to open their mouths and looking over their shoulders.”

“People who look over their shoulders is good,” Gary smirked. “Fear makes the wolf bigger than he is.” (German Proverb)

“I like, “Fear is a tyrant and a despot, more terrible than the rack, more potent than the snake,” Roy said.

“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself - nameless, unreasoning, unjustified, terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance,” Clarence added.

“Not that one,” Gary groaned, “He was a Democrat.”

“What ARE you people talking about?” Ray asked.

“George Bush,” they all replied in unison.

“He was in a mental hospital the last I heard,” Ray said.

“I’ll be back,” Gary replied.

“He got killed”, Roy said, “Must have believed his movies and thought he was bullet-proof.”

“So that’s why he never showed up,” Gary said.

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They didn’t really have a plan beyond gunning down Marshall Thomas. They were fresh out of ideas. America had suffered enough already, so blowing up bridges and taking down power lines just didn’t seem like the thing to do. Maybe they could head east and find targets of opportunity.

Without realizing it, Ray had set Gary off. In May of 1968 when the biggest tornado in the history of Iowa had hit his hometown, Charles City, the American Red Cross had shown up all right, just like they were supposed to. The only thing was the Red Cross had charged people \$3.50 for those ‘free’ meals. Gary had also heard, though it was just a story that the Red Cross actually charged soldiers for donuts and coffee in WW II. Probably wasn’t true, but still...

Chris and Matt sanded off all of the camo paint and they painted the 5-ton trucks to look like commercial delivery trucks. They did the same with several of the pickups. An assortment of armaments and supplies was loaded onto a truck and they hooked up the Airstream trailers to the pickups. A 4th pickup pulled the fuel trailer. Everything had USMS logos.

They drove down to Flagstaff and bought a used Greyhound sized bus and painted the windows black. Chris carefully lettered US Marshal’s Service on the sides of the vehicle. Then, they returned to Flagstaff and introduced the Marshal Marshall Thomas and a few of his pals to their Creator. They took a few extra minutes to retrieve the badges and ID’s from the group of US Marshal that lay dead in the street. Everyone one had a set of fake US Marshals credentials, all they’d needed was the badge and the credential case and it was easier to take them than make them. And the US Marshal thing was to make sure that Nelson got full credit. US Marshals are appointed by the President or the Attorney General. So, if the kidnappings were attributed to the USMS, the President would get the credit (blame).

They had a plan and it was very poetic. They had all that pig wire and lots of barbed wire left over. They went several miles from the ranch, and using harvested pines, built a small prison camp. It wasn’t overly large; they only needed to house a few hundred people. It was covered by camo netting and like the ranch, was essentially invisible. They didn’t figure it would take more than a half dozen guards to keep the prisoners in check. Now they had a relo camp of their own to put the FEMA people through what they were doing to others. Feed them MRE’s and not give them anything but tents to live in and no fires.

Their tactic would be to arrest the FEMA people while acting as US Marshals. Communications around the country were still pretty bad, after all. The scheme might not hold up forever, but it was a start. FEMA has ten regional offices, and two area offices.

Each region serves several states, and regional staffs work directly with the states to help plan for disasters, develop mitigation programs, and meet needs when major disasters occur. In addition, FEMA had about 96 other locations, plus Mt. Weather.

They decided that 26 men would travel the country arresting the FEMA people and return them to the camp in the bus. And why 26 men, you might ask? Well, back when I was young a hundred years ago, I really liked the TV show *26 Men*. Of the show, one reviewer wrote, "This was a good, solid Western about the Arizona Rangers with Tris Coffin giving a fine performance every week. Worth seeing if it ever shows up somewhere. It also seemed to be a bridge between the kiddie Westerns (like Roy Rogers or Hopalong) and such adult fare as *Have Gun Will Travel*. *26 Men* also had THE BEST THEME SONG OF ALL THE WESTERNS: *This is the story of 26 men who rode the Arizona territory. . . 26 men who lived to ride again rode out to answer duty's call; 26 men who lived to fight again rode out for the right and the liberty of all.* With a great driving beat!"

The late Marty Robbins paid them a tribute, too: "Big Iron"

To the town of Agua Fria, rode a stranger one fine day.  
*Hardly spoke to folks around him, didn't have too much to say.*  
*No one dared to ask his business, no one dared to make a slip.*  
*For the stranger there amongst them, had a big iron on his hip.*  
*Big iron on his hip.*

*It was early in the morning, when he rode into the town.*  
*He came riding from the south side, slowly lookin' all around.*  
*He's an outlaw loose and running, came the whisper from each lip.*  
*And he's here to do some business, with the big iron on his hip.*  
*Big iron on his hip.*

*In this town there lived an outlaw, by the name of Texas Red.*  
*Many men had tried to take him and that many men were dead.*  
*He was vicious and a killer, though a youth of twenty-four.*  
*And the notches on his pistol, numbered one and nineteen more.*  
*One and nineteen more.*

*Now the stranger started talking, made it plain to folks around;*  
*Was an Arizona Ranger, wouldn't be too long in town.*  
*He came here to take an outlaw back, alive, or maybe dead.*  
*And he said it didn't matter; he was after Texas Red.*  
*After Texas Red.*

*Wasn't long before the story was relayed to Texas Red.*  
*But the outlaw didn't worry; men that tried before were dead.*  
*Twenty men had tried to take him; twenty men had made a slip.*  
*Twenty-one would be the Ranger; with the big iron on his hip.*

*Big iron on his hip.*

*The morning passed so quickly, it was time for them to meet.  
It was twenty past eleven, when they walked out in the street.  
Folks were watching from their windows; every-body held their breath.  
They knew this handsome Ranger, was about to meet his death.  
About to meet his death.*

*There was forty feet between them, when they stopped to make their play.  
And the swiftness of the Ranger, is still talked about today.  
Texas Red had not cleared leather, when a bullet fairly ripped.  
And the Ranger's aim was deadly, with the big iron on his hip.  
Big iron on his hip.*

*It was over in a moment, and the folks had gathered round.  
There before them lay the body of the outlaw, on the ground.  
Oh, he might have gone on living, but he made one fatal slip.  
When he tried to match the Ranger, with the big iron on his hip.  
Big iron on his hip.*

*Big iron. Big iron.  
When he tried to match the Ranger, with the big iron on his hip.*

The 26 men set off towards the east, 3 old cowboys, 4 Indians and 19 others. Their first stop would be FEMA Region I, Boston, MA. It was a long drive, and when they arrested the people, they were so tightly packed in the bus they could hardly breathe. The first adventure took a week and they now had their first 'guests'. The one bus clearly wasn't enough, so they bought a second and fixed it up to match the first. The Region II office had been in New York but now was in Albany. And they now had enough bus space, although the people were still packed in like sardines. Back to Arizona they went. They were using up the oldest MRE's first. Most of them were still good. The nearest anything to the camp was a good 20 miles or more, so the people could scream their heads off and no one would hear them. Their guests noticed that the wire was all attached to the poles with insulators and naturally assumed that the fence was electrified. The pair of wires running down and into the ground added to the illusion. The big show that Derek and the other guards made of turning off the electricity fed the illusion. Of course, the Claymore mines that faced inward weren't all that appealing either.

They took a week off to avoid being predictable and skipped Region III, Washington DC. Besides, they needed to repaint the busses to Olive Drab and add US Army markings. This time, they went as soldiers who were rushing to protect the FEMA employees in the Region IV office in Atlanta. The folks were so grateful to be rescued and removed from in harm's way that they didn't have a clue for almost 2 hours. It turned out that a lot of the old MRE's weren't quite up to par, what a shame. Now, they needed a new approach. They waited 9 days and headed to Region VI in Denton, Texas. This time, they were there to relieve the guard, not to haul the people to safety.



Scott did a commendable job of acting as the officer in charge and the phone call that Ryan placed to the Denton office about an hour later warning of a suitcase nuke had the people begging for the Army to transport them away from the building. Scott called Ryan back at the pay phone and told him the people wanted to be evacuated and to bring the busses. They had removed the paint from the busses windows and the people didn't have a clue until they were a few miles from Denton and they repainted the windows from the outside.

They were being right friendly to the FEMA folks; they gave them water to bathe once a week and had been forced to dig into their newer supplies of MRE's. They had to let them bathe, do you have any idea how hot it gets in Arizona in the summer? Region VIII was close, Denver. But, they waited for three weeks and then the US Marine Corps showed up in Denver led by Becky, dressed as a Lt. Colonel. And, they were only there to lend support to the National Guard not to take their place. The Marines must have intimidated the Guard; they began to 'desert'. It began with one or two; then escalated to three, four and on some days five. The Marines also had to draw a truckload of MRE's from the Army, because they were 'running low'. Becky asked the National Guard Captain what kind of an operation he was running and warned him that he'd better take his remaining troops and locate those cowardly deserters. An hour later, the Denver FEMA staff was on their way to Arizona.

There were 4 regional FEMA offices remaining, but two were scratched from the list, Seattle and San Francisco. All that left was Region V, Chicago and Region VII, Kansas City. Obviously the US Marshals couldn't be trusted nor could the Army and Marines. And, they had to go through KC on the way back from Chicago, so the FBI went to investigate rumors that this whole scheme was an inside job under the direction of someone in the Chicago office, which of course had been relocated from Chicago because of the nuclear strike.

The FBI took the folks in 2s and 3s for questioning but they seemed all to go to lunch after being questioned. It was true, too. They were sitting in one of the busses enjoying a gourmet MRE. The FBI headed back to Arizona and stopped for fuel and to rent two additional busses in KC. There hadn't been time for anyone to figure out what ruse had been used to clear out the Chicago office and it worked just fine in KC. What was that Clarence or someone asked about how you kill a snake? Except for the west coast offices and DC, the body of FEMA was headless. And, they had killed no one. Of course, feeding them MRE's probably constituted torture under the Geneva Convention, but tough. They drove the empty busses north a ways to the Grand Canyon and ran them over the side.

## Preparations II – the Revolution – Chapter 28 – The Big Prize

*My Fellow Americans...*

*In all my years in this great land of ours, I thought I had seen about every bad thing there was to see. Apparently, I was mistaken. Over the course of the past several weeks, the US Marshal I sent to the Flagstaff area and several of his companions were gunned down in the streets of that city.*

*Thereafter, a series of attacks began on the regional FEMA offices. Seven of those offices were attacked and the employees kidnapped. Despite a nationwide manhunt, no sign of the employees has been found.*

*Congress has authorized a reward of \$50 million for the safe return of the captive FEMA employees. Congress has also authorized, at my insistence, a \$50 million reward for information leading to the arrests of Gary Olsen, Ronald Green and Clarence Rawlings. Congress took it upon itself to declare that these payments shall not be deemed as income to the recipient. Therefore, the rewards shall not be subject to state or federal income taxes.*

*I urge all American to help us bring these killers to justice and locate the missing FEMA employees or their bodies.*

*Thank you and good day.*

“Would you listen to that,” Clarence said, “\$100 million dollars.”

“Go get Derek and Jennifer, Clarence,” Gary asked, “I think it’s about time to make crime pay.”

“What’s up Dad?” Derek asked when he appeared.

“Just sit tight for now,” Gary requested.

“Did you want to see me Mr. Olsen? Jennifer asked.

“How would you like to do the company a favor, Jennifer? Gary asked.

“Sure, anything,” she replied, “What do you want me to do?”

“It’s like this,” Gary explained. “That champion of freedom, President Nelson, has put up a \$50 million dollar reward for those FEMA people and another \$50 million for our capture. Tax free, no less! Derek, I want you and the other people to move every single thing on this ranch back to California to that Underground City. And son, do it quickly and quietly. Jennifer, when the move is complete, you are going to discover those FEMA people and the three of us are just going to happen to be checking on them when

the law shows up. You'll be a hero and we'll have \$100 million."

"How do you know they won't just shoot you were you stand?" Derek asked.

"Jennifer is going go to the media first, that's why," Gary said.

"And then I suppose we come roaring in like the 7th Cavalry and rescue you, right?" Derek asked.

"There ya go," Gary laughed.

"It will take at least a month to move everything to California," Derek opined.

"That's ok son, we have plenty of MRE's," Gary said.

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It took 35 days, actually. When everything was safely moved to California, they left the homes sitting right where they were, Derek took the 'refugees' their daily rations, and he loosened a section of the netting, allowing it to fall away. He returned to the ranch where all of the other men were concealed in the now empty shelter. Shortly thereafter, Jennifer happened to 'discover' the prison camp. She told the people that there was a lock on the power switch so she'd have to go for help. She had only been to Flagstaff that one time and everyone figured that no one would recognize her.

Jennifer drove on down to Flagstaff, went by the cluster of news vans and told them she'd found the FEMA hostages and needed to know where the Sheriff's office was. The news media was more than willing to show her where the Sheriff's office was located; they were on the verge of the story of the century. The Sheriff rounded up all of his deputies and Jennifer led them back to the prison camp. And a miracle occurred, the three old geezers were at the camp, unarmed, jeering those poor FEMA captives through the fence. It instantly turned into a media circus. The old men were handcuffed and thrown into the Sheriff's vehicles, the lock shot off the switch box and the prisoners finally set free. One of the prisoners said something was awfully strange; their captors had removed all of those funny little mines the week before.

They loaded the released captives aboard busses and transported them to Flagstaff. They were in surprisingly good health; they'd lost weight, but other than that, the doctors who examined them could find nothing wrong. President Nelson, in what could only be described as a politically motivated stunt, flew to Flagstaff to greet the freed prisoners and see the deadly trio. He made sure that the media covered his presenting the check for \$100 million to that brave young Doctor, Jennifer. With crowd of media following her every move, Jennifer took the check to Wells Fargo and deposited the check in the account of The Three Amigos Corporation, her employer. She then got in her pickup and drove off.

President Nelson visited the three old men in jail and said they sure didn't look like much to him. They were washed up, he told them, and they would pay big time for their crimes. He headed for the airport to board his plane and return to the east coast. As the aircraft took off, 4 Stinger missiles were fired at it and it crashed and burned. At the same time, a group of heavily armed, masked men attacked the jail and freed the prisoners. With the police in heavy pursuit, they headed north on 180 from Williams. They seemed to be drunk, veering their vehicles like they were, but the police vehicles hit the mines they'd placed in the road and the pursuit ended as rapidly as it had begun.

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11Nov11...Underground City, California...

"Thank you for everything people," Gary said. "You've turned this little refuge into quite the little city. The three of us, and our wives, will just stay here and live out our days. Ron, Clarence and I have made out a check to each family for \$1 million. You are free to stay or leave. We have enough of everything to last us for years."

"I second that," Ron said, "It's been a wild ride. The only thing I would have done different was to call our group 'The Freedom Riders'."

"You all be good to each other," Clarence added.

## Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 1 – Dune Buggy's

The Underground City...

The three old men were looking forward to their retirement. They'd bought the piece of land the mine was on, after the fact, and each was living under one of the assumed names that the false ID's provided. They had quietly formed another corporation, Freedom Riders, Inc., a Nevada corporation, and just as quietly transferred the funds to a bank in the Bahamas and back to Wells Fargo in the name of the new corporation. Even after giving each family \$1 million, they still had all the money they could ever hope to use. Gary had several million left over from the Wesley Clark money and they were sitting on an additional \$45 million.

Ray and Stacy stayed on and consequently, so did Ryan and Jennifer. The people from Palmdale decided to return home and see if there was anything left of Moon Shadows. Thankfully, Jan went with them. Jan, you see, had lost a lot of that excess weight and she was back to within 10 pounds of what she'd weighed in the mid '90's when they'd met. Both Gary and Ron had to watch themselves to avoid leering. Some things it seems never change. Mutt was raising hell about getting Britney, Aaron and Erik back, but Damon offered to pay her the child support he'd owe until their 18th birthdays and that took care of that. Derek wasn't sure what he wanted to do, so he stayed on until he figured something out.

John wanted to go to work at the prison west of Blythe (Chuckawalla) so he moved into Blythe. Being a Correctional Officer in California was a great job because they had a powerful union. Kevin just wanted to get anywhere that Ron wasn't and Ron gave him a few thousand and put him on a bus to LA, telling him not to come back, period. Brenda and Jennifer wanted to get back to Ft. Smith and Paula and Mark to Austin. Somehow Ron and Linda ended up being without children one more time. The quiet was deafening. The cousins stayed, they liked their jobs just fine and the relative newcomers, Jim, Sam and Harry and their wives still didn't have anything to go back to and they felt needed there so they stayed on. There were 3 reservations in the area, Fort Mojave, Chemehuevi Valley and Colorado River, so Jennifer had lots of people to help. Ryan resigned his commission in the Army to work with Jennifer and Stacy took up the task of educating the younger generation in Blythe.

"So, who's running the country?" Ron asked.

"Darned if I know," Gary replied, "The Speaker of the House I suppose."

"Who is he and what are his politics?" Ron asked.

"All I can tell you is that the Democrats control the House and Senate, so he must be a Democrat," Gary responded. "That pretty much tells you what his politics are."

"Are we due for a Republican yet?" Clarence asked.

“Probably not, Clarence,” Ron replied, “They seem to be taking 8 year turns these days. But, you never know about these things, do you? Anymore it seems like Republicans are a minority in this country and those of us who care about the country are labeled as militant right-wing Fascists.”

“Two out of three ain’t bad,” Clarence chuckled, “We are a might testy and we’re definitely right-wing. But flying that Gadsden Flag is sort of announcing ourselves ain’t it?”

“You have to stand for something or you’ll fall for anything Clarence,” Gary chimed in. “There’s nothing wrong with that flag. I’ve been meaning to ask you something. Why did they use 4 Stinger missiles? Wouldn’t 2 have been enough?”

“Wanted to be sure for one thing,” Ron replied, “And it’s not like we’re short on Stingers. We probably have more than the Army.”

“How did they get them to hit that plane without paying someone to modify them?” Gary asked.

“Well, it seems that Damon just pulled out this little printed circuit board and that disabled the IFF,” Ron said.

“Really? I paid that guy \$50 thousand to modify those 2 missiles were used in Atlanta,” Gary groaned.

“You weren’t paying him for what he did Gar-Bear, you were paying him for what he knew,” Ron laughed.

“But how did Damon know which circuit board to pull?” Gary asked.

“He told me he just pulled the one labeled IFF,” Clarence explained.

Mt. Weather...

“So help me God.” With those words, the Speaker of the House, a Democrat from the great state of Illinois became the new President of the United States. Jerry F. Costello was now President and he quickly selected Michael Capuano from Massachusetts to be his Vice President. Approval of Capuano was a foregone conclusion. Washington was ready to reoccupy and all but the key DHS people returned to the Capitol. It was a real shame about Nelson, but he had made it clear that he was a true Democrat in the end. And, he had been right about one thing; America had certainly become an armed camp.

But, that was easily fixed with a new weapons ban and although the USA Patriot Act was unpopular, it was sorely needed. The American people were nothing but children and it took a strong central government to keep them in line. Of course, with all of those factories destroyed, a lot of people would need government assistance for a long time,

but that's what the middle class and the rich were for, to pay for the poor to sit on their butts. Yes sir, this was going to be a Congress to be remembered. The Democrats had absolute majorities in the House, the Senate and the White House. It was a shame about the Supreme Court, but you couldn't have everything.

The Underground City...

"Well, at least we have TV back," Gary said, "I feel like I've missed several seasons of Stargate-1."

"You didn't miss nothing Gary," Clarence suggested. "I seen that show. They just fighting a different bunch of aliens every week."

"I wonder what she's doing these days," Gary muttered.

"Who?" Ron asked.

"Sigourney Weaver," Gary said, "The person who made Alien worth watching."

"She's 6' tall Gar-Bear," Ron protested. "Clarence, you've got to learn to watch what you say. Now he's off and running about her again."

"Just right," Gary said. "Eye level."

"Who's this guy from Illinois?" Ron asked.

"Never heard of him or that guy from Massachusetts," Gary said. "Probably some of Teddy's cronies."

"What do you think he meant about the Republicans doing a few things right by accident?" Clarence asked.

"I have no idea Clarence, but you can look for taxes to go up," Gary said.

"Do you know what we need?" Ron asked.

"Tell me oh wise one," Gary smirked.

"We need some of the Desert Patrol/Light Strike Vehicles. It is a modified Chenoweth, off-road, three-man, 2x4 racing vehicle. The DPV is designed to operate anywhere a four-wheel drive can, with additional speed and maneuverability," Ron said. "The DPV performs numerous combat roles including, but not limited to: special operations delivery vehicle, command and control (C2) vehicle, rear area combat operation vehicle, reconnaissance vehicle, forward observation/lasing team and artillery forward observer vehicle. The weapons systems used with the DPV's are: Mk-19 40mm grenade launcher, M2HB .50 cal. machine gun, M240 7.62mm machine gun, AT-4 Missile and M3 Carl

Gustav recoilless rifle. The addition of a third seat for a gunner, and additional mounts for weapons systems has enhanced its effectiveness. That's what we need."

"Well hell, we should get 6," Gary laughed, "Right after we get more Mk-19's, more Ma-Deuces and 6 M3 Carl Gustav recoilless rifles, whatever they are."

"For your information Gar-Bear, the M3 Carl Gustav recoilless rifle is an 84mm system that fires High Explosive Anti-Tank (HEAT), High Explosive (HE), High Explosive Dual Purpose (HEDP), Smoke, Illumination, Target Practice (TP) and is made in Sweden," Ron explained. "The M3 Carl Gustav recoilless rifle is part of a system the military calls the MAAWS."

"Well, I'll reserve my flight to Stockholm right away," Gary said.

"The Rangers have been using it since 1990 and the SEALs use it too," Ron snapped.

"We are retired Ronald," Gary yelled, "R-E-T-I-R-E-D."

"Yeah, but wouldn't some dune buggy's be fun to run around in?" Ron asked.

"Well, sure partner, but why do we need to arm them like an M-1117?" Gary admitted.

"We only need to install the mounts for the weapons, not the weapons," Ron clung to the issue.

"I'll tell you what, you get the weapons and I'll get the dune buggies," Gary offered.

It wasn't that far to the 29 Palms installation. They would have the Mk-19's and the Ma-Deuces, Ron figured, and probably some of the M240 7.62mm machine guns. The recoilless rifles might be more of a challenge. The closest Army fort was Ft. Irwin, so that would be the place to start looking. Derek knew Ft. Irwin so Ron would ask him to go there. No one among them knew the 29 Palms installation so they would only go there if they couldn't get something at Irwin. Yeah, yeah, the Palmdale Militia had been to 29 Palms, but they were in Palmdale.

The company that made the dune buggy chassis kits was in El Cajon, CA, e.g., the San Diego area and they were still digging out from the Chinese invasion. Gary called Dick on the radio and asked if Chris was working or hanging out. Dick told Gary that with the money Gary had given him, Chris was devoted to building stock cars fulltime. Gary asked Dick to ask Chris to get his butt over to the Underground City and help him out of a terrible fix he was in. Maybe Chris figured there was money in it, who knows, but he showed up a couple of days later.

"You see this military dune buggy?" Gary said pointing to the pictures on Global Security.



“Yeah,” Chris replied.

Gary switched to the Chenoweth website. “You see this dune buggy?” he asked.

“Yeah,” Chris said, “So Chenoweth builds the DPV, so what?”

“I need 6 and they aren’t in business at the moment,” Gary explained. “Anyone who can build a roll cage like you do can build those dune buggy’s from scratch.”

“Well, I suppose I could if I can figure out what size of tubing that is,” Chris said.

“What size tubing do you have the most of?” Gary asked.

“Inch and a half,” Chris replied.

“Chris, that tubing in those pictures is 1½” tubing,” Gary said.

“How do you know that?” Chris asked, “It could be 1” or 1¼”.”

“Do you have any 1” or 1¼” tubing?” Gary asked.

“No,” Chris admitted.

“Then it’s 1½” tubing,” Gary repeated.

“And you want 6?” Chris asked.

“You bet,” Gary acknowledged.

“All right, I’ll built them, but it will take a while,” Chris said.

“I’m sort of in a rush here partner,” Gary said.

“I’ll see what I can do,” Chris smiled.

Palmdale...

What Chris could do was get a hold of a friend who worked for one of the many distributors Chenoweth had in the greater LA area. The friend knew where there were 8 of the dune buggy’s all welded up and ready for final assembly, like adding the engines, etc. All the parts were there, and they’d escaped being damaged during nuke attack and the invasion. The friend told Chris the price for all 8 and Chris divided the total by 6 had Dick radio the price to Gary. Chris’s fee for assembling the 6 buggy’s was exactly 2 dune buggy’s. If you were as bad a mechanic as Gary, it was more than a bargain.

The Underground City...

“There you go Gary,” Chris said.

“How did you get them done so fast?” Gary asked.

“Oh, let’s just say I had an incentive,” Chris explained.

“Thanks a lot, buddy, I really appreciate it,” Gary said.

“Believe me, the pleasure is all mine,” Chris smiled.

## Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 2 – Riding the Range

Derek was most fortunate at Ft. Irwin. He found everything they wanted and more. They attached the weapons mounts to the 6 dune buggy's and gave them the once over.

"Where do you put the saddle bags and the rifle scabbard?" Gary asked.

"What do you need those for?" Clarence asked.

"Well, I figured we'd ride the horses in the spring and fall and use the dune buggy's in the summer and winter," Gary explained. "Doesn't make any sense to have to empty and reload the saddlebags all the time."

How do you argue with 'logic' like that? It's a lot easier to just find an extra scabbard and throw the saddlebags over one of the pipes. These major issues resolved, the men were ready to ride. They wanted the gunner's seat up on top so they wouldn't miss anything.

Washington DC...

When the Democrats introduced their revised version of the Patriot Act, one Republican joked that they could eliminate 346 pages of the 347-page bill by simply saying, "You can't, but we can." Of course this was the same guy who objected to the new AWB suggesting it would be 86 pages shorter if they just listed the legal firearms instead of the illegal firearms. So, I guess you couldn't rely on anything he said. What was he griping about, you could still own non-repeating weapons? The single shot shotgun was the sole exception to center fire cartridges for anyone but the military and law enforcement.

Of course everyone realized that the LEO's needed those powerful center fire weapons. And, the AWB also outlawed bulletproof vests because with no guns, who would need a vest other than the military or law enforcement. Since the ATF had failed miserably for years to control firearms, the organization became the AT and Homeland Security took over the control of firearms. The bill didn't specify which division of DHS should handle the firearms registration now required for everything that discharged a projectile, so the Secretary gave the job to FEMA.

Palmdale...

"I can't believe they insisted on diesel engines for those dune buggy's," Matt said,

"I used some Japanese diesel engines, Matt," Chris replied. "They're pretty dependable but Lord help them if they need parts."

"Why?" Matt asked.

"Well the Japanese pull their engines out at around 30,000 miles and ship them to the

US,” Chris explained. “American parts don’t fit and if you can’t get an aftermarket part, you have to send to Japan for the part.”

“Why didn’t you use American diesels?” Matt wanted to know.

“The Japanese engines were cheaper,” Chris explained.

The Underground City...

“I don’t know where Chris got these engines,” Ron said, “But are they are pretty fast.”

“We’d better replace them with American diesels,” Clarence suggested, “Them engines got Japanese markings.”

“Figures,” Gary said. “Ok, find us some American diesels.”

“Are you going to register your BB gun Gary?” Clarence asked.

“Sure, right after we turn in the tanks,” Gary laughed. “Maybe I ought to send Dubya a letter and tell him I’m not coming back. I hear that FEMA is trying to hire a few thousand good men to enforce the guns laws. Maybe Kevin could get a job with them, Ron.”

“[unprintable] gun laws,” Ron said, “We need to saddle up and head to Washington.”

“They haven’t lifted the 50 mile travel restriction, Ron,” Clarence reminded him.

“They must have,” Ron insisted, “Chris got here and it’s a hell of a lot further than 50 miles. And those politicians seem to get to Washington ok.”

“Well Ron, there are always exceptions and exceptions to the exceptions,” Gary said.

“Why did we call this company the Freedom Riders if we can’t ride for Freedom?” Ron slammed the table.

“It seemed like a good idea at the time,” Gary replied.

“Who says we can’t ride?” Ray injected. “You guys have all those fake ID’s,” he pointed out, “Law Enforcement is exempt. Use the badges.”

“We’re a little long in the tooth to keep pretending to be US Marshals or whatever,” Ron said.

“Retired LEO’s are also exempt,” Ray said, “Stamp ‘Retired’ on the ID’s and you’ve restored your credibility.”

“That’s only half the battle, Ray,” Gary objected, “Assuming we overcame the minor

hurdle of not being able to travel, there aren't very many of us and I'm fresh out of ideas about what we can do about that Democratic machine they seem to have in Washington."

"I agree with Gary, Ray," Ron joined in, "With power not restored fully and cities all over the country in disrepair, it wouldn't do any good to attack the infrastructure."

"And, Ray," Clarence added, "The only other target obvious to me is the food supply. We can't attack that either. People are having enough trouble getting something to eat."

Washington DC...

All joking aside, the US really was in trouble. The cities were being cleaned up, but there was a lot of rebuilding to do. It wasn't likely that most Americans would kowtow to the new AWB. What was wrong with owning a pump shotgun, for example? And, the Supreme Court would undoubtedly find the new USA Patriot Act to be unconstitutional because it simply went too far. Most people just ignored the travel restrictions so long as they could get gasoline or diesel fuel. The military refused to take part in enforcing these new laws because they were sworn to protect and defend the Constitution, not the politicians.

Even Congress was having second thoughts. It had all seemed like the thing to do at the time, but when one colleague suggested to another that they get in some quail hunting, they both realized that they had pump shotguns. And had there been a proper communication systems operating, they believed that their phone lines would be clogged. As it was, those locales where email and the phones were up and running flooded them with phone calls and emails. Moreover, some of them realized that they didn't really represent anyone any more. Those nukes had essentially wiped out their districts. They had passed a flurry of legislation, but had no one to administer the new laws. They were like kids with a pocketful of money at an ice cream stand. They'd eaten all of the ice cream and now had the inevitable bellyache.

The Underground City...

Damon listened patiently and then popped off, as he was prone to do. "We ought to just shoot all of the politicians," he'd said.

As much as Gary liked that idea, voting with a gun instead of a ballot would only lend credence to the assertions of those who passed the new AWB. They had to do something, but what? "We can't just sit on our butts and do nothing," he thought. "Wait a minute, yes we can. Sort of..."

"Look guys, does anyone remember how Gandhi defeated the British and gained independence for India? Or, how Martin Luther King overcame segregation?" Gary asked.

"I do," Clarence said, "Passive resistance. Do I get a prize?"

“Get serious pal,” Gary replied, “But you’re right, passive resistance. Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. Passive resistance is an all-sided sword; it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used. Passive resistance is a misnomer for non-violent resistance. Passive resistance, unlike nonviolence, has no power to change men’s hearts. The sword of passive resistance does not require a scabbard. Jesus Christ, Daniel, and Socrates represented the purest form of passive resistance or soul force.”

“I like the idea of that,” Ray said, “Beats the hell out of fighting an invisible enemy, but what do you have in mind?”

“We travel around the country and organize a passive resistance movement,” Gary suggested.

“Won’t ‘they’ try to stop us?” Ron asked.

“If ‘they’ do, we’ll shoot ‘them’ and bury the bodies deep,” Gary smiled.

“That doesn’t sound very passive to me,” Clarence observed.

“Maybe not,” Gary said, “But we’re wanted men and we can’t do much organizing from a jail cell or the end of a noose.”

“So we’re going to preach passive resistance and practice active resistance?” Ron asked.

“Yeah,” Gary said, “Do you object?”

“Not at all,” Ron responded, “Just wanted to be sure what you had in mind.”

“It’s simple partner,” Gary explained. “We’ll just suggest that they obey the old laws and ignore the new ones. And any real vocal critics we get must be people who support the new laws, so we’ll just still their voices.”

“Oh good,” Clarence said, “For a minute there it sounded like you wanted us to kill a bunch of people.”

“Not a bunch,” Gary said, “Just a few.”

“Hi-yo silver,” Ron joked.

“What do you mean WE white man?” Gary countered.

Actually the three old geezers were the perfect people to preach a doctrine of passive

resistance. They were in their 70's and didn't look like they could fight their way out of a wet paper bag. Ron had that deep, commanding voice, too. Ray, Stacy, Derek and Damon would accompany them in their quest. The others would stay and protect the Underground City against intruders.

They needed another Airstream, but easily located one in Blythe. Damon and Derek could sleep on the couches and everyone would otherwise have a trailer of his or her own. They couldn't haul around a large arsenal either, so they settled for the easily concealable MP5's. Fuel would no doubt be a problem, so they had Damon drive the front half of one of their Chevron tankers. And, Damon and Derek were young enough to pass as US Marshals in a pinch, so they didn't stamp 'Retired' on their phony ID's.

They would preach a very simple idea, obey the old laws and ignore the new laws. If enough people did it, the Congress would be forced to change the laws. And, be sure and vote Republican in the next election, regardless of your political beliefs. Some of their ideas were clearly better than others. And, they were going to be preaching to the choir, so their trip was actually little more than a road trip to see the country, Americans wouldn't buy that passive resistance crap. About the third community they hit, the boys were convinced that they had it all wrong. So, being old and tired and prudent, they turned around and headed back to the Underground City. Far too many Americans believed the slogan about, 'my cold dead hands...'

"But it was such a good idea," Gary insisted.

"May be partner," Ron said, "For India, but these people aren't about to let anyone take their guns. Hell, we took guns with us, didn't we? How are they any different than us?"

"Well, for one thing," Gary said, "Most everyone in the US is younger than we are."

So the order of the day was to be active, not passive, resistance. The thing was, there weren't too many people north of Blythe, California to resist, actively or passively. It was mostly just desert (Mojave) and the jackrabbits didn't carry guns. Worse, the rattlesnakes heard them coming and slithered away. They did manage to keep Damon busy. He was on top of the Airstreams with a can of lacquer thinner and a rag, scrubbing off the camo paint.

"Well, are we just going to sit around here and dry up and wither away?" Ron asked.

"Or, are we going to go out and raise a little hell? Personally, I'd rather go down fighting than sit in a rocking chair and die of old age."

"Yeah Gary," Clarence said, "What about it?"

"Well, there is always FEMA and the AT," Gary said.

### **Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 3 – Alcohol, Tobacco w/ Firearms**

The three old men all smoked, though they didn't drink anymore. And with cigarettes at \$60 a carton it just seemed like a good idea to go after the Bureau of Alcohol and Tobacco, with firearms. Besides, what was wrong with running your own still? It was practically an American institution. Dig up Jack Daniels and ask him. And while we're on the subject, although Jack Daniels was considered by most to be bourbon, it really wasn't, you know. It was Tennessee sipping whiskey, although Gar-Bear rarely sipped it when he drank it.

It sort of figured that they'd find AT agents wherever cigarettes were manufactured and booze was bottled. Sounded like Kentucky to them. Kentucky led the nation in production of Burley tobacco, followed by Tennessee. Only North Carolina out produced either state and that only counted when one considered all tobaccos. Federal law allows individuals to make beer and wine for their own use without a license, but not distilled spirits. There are also state and local laws forbidding the manufacture of liquor, and a range of taxes on liquor production. Federal, state, and local taxes typically make up 55 percent of the price of a bottle of liquor. Under state laws, moonshining is often only a misdemeanor, but federal law typically imposes much stricter sentences. Someone charged in one federal operation faced prison sentences up to 60 years.

Home-distilling has been part of American life since soon after the first colonists arrived. Prohibition and the economic toll of the Great Depression spurred a boom in production, which was combated first by "revenueurs" from the Treasury Department, and then the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms. Some say the heyday of moonshine was after Prohibition, when the demand for cheap liquor in urban centers was at its peak. "That's when the moonshine was really big — in the '50s and the '60s," says Thomas Allison, 76, who pursued illegal liquor makers as an agent for the Treasury Department and then the ATF. In the late 1960s, federal agents put more resources into the fight. They began night infrared flights to spot illegal stills cooking in the night. By 1980, major moonshine operations had been largely vanquished, Allison says. But as the federal government focused its attention elsewhere the moonshine trade resurfaced.

California probably had a lot of liquor agents, too and New York state; the two states produced a lot of wine. But, they didn't drink, you see, so Kentucky and Tennessee were on the agenda. And darn it, they'd forgotten to get ATF ID, but they probably had new ID since they were only the BAT now. The federal government wasn't all that involved in the regulation of US produced tobacco products anyway; states did most of the regulation of those finished products. The BAT only got involved at the local level when the value of the tobacco products exceeded a certain value. Or, someone dared to import some Russian cigarettes, ugh, and not pay the tax.

On 7/21/04 at approximately 1000 hours Western Alaska Alcohol and Narcotics Team in conjunction with the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives, Internal Revenue Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Revenue, Kotzebue Police Department and Kotzebue AST patrol executed a search warrant on



the residence of Daniel Myrick age 51, and his wife Darce Myrick age 44, both from Kotzebue.

The search warrant was in response to the sale of illegally imported, non-taxed cigarettes from Russia being sold from Kotzebue Gun and Pawn which is a pawn shop that the Myricks' operate out of their home. The search warrant execution resulted in the seizure of 37 cartons of illegally imported Russian cigarettes, 37 liters of wine, 19.5 liters of distilled spirits and 24 liters of malt beverage.

The cigarettes seized are valued at \$1,665 and the alcohol was valued at \$3,875. Both Daniel Myrick and Darce Myrick were arrested on Misconduct Involving Unstamped Cigarettes 1st and 2nd degree. Both individuals were transported to holding facilities in Kotzebue to await arraignments on the above charges. Kotzebue is a local option community limiting the amount of alcohol that can be possessed by a person at one time. The total amount of fines in this case against the Myricks for illegal cigarette trafficking is estimated at \$313,000. Seemed fair, \$313,000 in fines for \$5,540 in contraband. Oh, that's right, the seizure probably cost the government several million dollars, and they had to get back those expenses, didn't they?

*East bound and down, loaded up and truckin', we're gonna do what they say can't be done. We've got a long way to go and a short time to get there. I'm east bound, just watch ol' "Bandit" run.* They set out in the same Airstreams and they took both the Chevron tanker and trailer. Plus the 3 5-ton trucks loaded to the ceilings with all kinds of attention getting gadgets. And, most everyone had to go because they needed more Airstreams to sleep in and more people to drive and...

"Where are we going to start this show?" Clarence asked.

"Let's go to Jim Beam first," Gary answered. "Ray seems to like that expensive bourbon of theirs. Highway 245, Clermont, KY, here we come."

They got the bourbon without a problem, but the AT offices were in Ashland, Bardstown, Bowling Green, Lexington, London, Louisville and Owensville. And Tennessee only had 2 locations, Knoxville and Nashville. They took the atlas and drew up a big circular route and then decided that it would be too obvious. Alphabetical order wasn't any better, they assumed, so they wrote the names of all the BAT offices in the area on slips of paper and drew them from a hat.

And since it was once referred to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, they felt free to use both firearms and explosives to send their message to the people really responsible for the high price of cigarettes, the Congress. It seems that Congress saw the states taxing the living dickens out of cigarettes purportedly to fund anti-smoking costs (BS) but were raking in the big bucks. Since the federal tax attached first, and is paid by the manufacturers as an excise tax to be passed on, it only made sense to triple the tax. No one could argue taxation without representation either, the bill started in the House of Representatives.

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Bowling Green was the first name out of the hat. It was located in southern Kentucky, north of Nashville, TN. The plan was moderately simple, keep a watch on the BAT office and when they had enough info, work out an attack scenario based on those observations. The agent in charge of the office was a married man whose children were grown and gone. He seemed to be just your average type Joe, but he had a reputation for strictly enforcing the laws. His staff must have been personally selected. About half of them were single men but had a bearing about them that implied they were a nasty bunch. This was satellite office charged with industrial operations, and therefore, the perfect first target. But, they couldn't decide who, or what to hit. In the past, their targets had all been essentially faceless, just names. Well, George was married, but they hadn't killed him. And Teresa Heinz had married into the Heinz family and her first husband of, what was it 30 years, had been her one true love. Nelson they knew little about and cared less. But, they'd finally screwed up and got to know their potential targets.

Ah yes, but there was still the office, wasn't there and it had regular business hours like any business office. They wouldn't mind taking out the single guys, but they must have had mothers and fathers and maybe brothers and sisters. And, after the federal building in LA, they had pretty much tried to avoid killing people. They guessed that was what the C-4 was for, and if properly used, they could just take out the AT office. They had the schedule down pat for the security officers at the building housing the AT office, so it was just a matter of breaking in at the appropriate moment, planting the explosives and bugging out. Didn't your Mama ever tell you that life wasn't simple?

Derek and Ray waited until the guard left to make his rounds. They broke into the building by slapping some duct tape on the glass door and breaking out the glass. They hurried to the AT office and broke in, tossed the backpack containing the explosives into the office and headed back the way they came. But, it took longer than they thought and just as they were exiting the same front door, the guard returned. He pulled his service pistol and fired off a volley of rounds.

"I'm hit," Derek gasped.

"How bad is it?" Ray asked, grabbing Derek and pushing him into the pickup.

"Just get out of here before that guard shoots again or the bomb blows," Derek said through gritted teeth.

"Where are you hit?" Ray asked, starting the motor and taking off with squealing tires and a cloud of exhaust.

"Right side, in my back," Derek groaned.

"Hang in there kid, it's only a couple of miles to the trailer park," Ray encouraged Derek.

Derek passed out, either from the pain or blood loss. They were less than ½ mile from the trailer park, so Ray just goosed it a little and hurried to the trailers. He pulled Derek out and shouted for someone to help him. The cousins came out and helped carry Derek to Harry and Janet's trailer. Janet was the paramedic, you may recall.

"Get Sammy," Janet said. "I sure wish Jennifer was here, this is a fairly serious wound."

"I don't know," Sammy said after examining the wound, "I sure wish Jennifer was here. I've assisted in a lot of operations on wounds like this, but I've never actually done one."

"Ladies, we don't have much choice here," Gary said, "They'll arrest Derek for sure if we take him to a hospital. We have plasma and all kinds of medical supplies, do you think you can handle it?"

"Janet?" Sammy asked.

"I'm game if you are. Someone get Mary to help us," Janet said.

The three women worked on the wound. It looked worse than it was, actually, but Derek wouldn't be attending any dances for a while. The bullet had barely missed the liver and other vital organs. Sammy opened a small incision, clamped off the bleeders, debrided the wound and began to make the repairs to the blood vessels as she'd seen the doctors do hundreds of times before.

With the vessels repaired, she began to stitch her way out using catgut suture material and leaving in a drainage tube. The surface layer was closed with black silk. They rolled Derek over and started on the exit wound. It wasn't much larger, probably an FMJ round. Sammy debrided the wound and again worked her way out, closing as she went. Then, Mary hung a bag of antibiotics and they bandaged both wounds.

"I think he'll be ok if those stitches in those blood vessels hold," Sammy said.

"How is he?" Gary asked.

"I've seen a lot worse," Janet said, "And they made it. But, if we're going to be running risks like this, you're going to have to get someone to watch the kids and have Ryan and Jennifer join us."

"Then, we'll just lay low here and send for them," Gary said. "I'll talk to Sharon about this."

They finally decided that Mary, the LPN, and her husband, Sam, would return to the Underground City and send Ryan and Jennifer back, together with more medical supplies. During the week that it would take to return to California and get Ryan and Jennifer to the Midwest, they would move to Nashville instead of staying in Bowling Green.

They would be at the Nashville KOA, 2626 Music Valley Drive, Nashville, TN. Sam and Mary left the next morning for California.

“How are you doing son?” Gary asked.

“It doesn’t hurt too badly, Dad,” Derek said.

“That’s probably the morphine,” Gary said. “We’ve leaving shortly to go to Nashville. We’ll be as careful as we can and Janet and Sammy will be here with you if you need anything. Mary is in the other room, do you want to see her?”

“Yeah, she’s probably worried sick,” Derek said.

“Well next time duck,” Gary kidded.

“Next time?” Derek groaned. “Once is enough.”

They found the KOA. It was located northeast of Nashville on state 155. It didn’t seem to have too many guests; apparently a lot of people were taking the government serious on the travel restrictions. Damon flashed the badge and came up with some sort of excuse to explain their presence. He never did tell them what he’d said to convince the operator of the campground that they were legitimate. Who knows, maybe the guy had just heard about the explosion in Bowling Green, KY and was a patriot. No one, including the guard, was killed in the explosion according to the radio. The office was a total loss and the government was looking for two men, one possibly wounded. That cinched it for them; using a hospital was out of the question.

“What went wrong Ray,” Gary asked.

“Nothing other than we had a little trouble finding the right office,” Ray said. “We were in and out, but maybe it took longer than I thought or maybe the guard just came back early.”

“Stuff happens, I suppose,” Gary said. “Ronald, we’re going to have to get one hell of a lot more information about this Nashville office before we blow it up.”

“We have all the time in the world Gar-Bear,” Ron assured him.

“Gary, I’m really sorry about Derek,” Ray said.

“Ray there’s nothing to be sorry about,” Gary assured him. “We just need to have better intelligence next time. We’ll just sit it out for a few days and let things cool down. Besides, I don’t believe it would be prudent to even start Intel ops until Ryan and Jennifer get here.”

“How badly is he hurt?” Clarence asked

“Partner, I think that’s what they call a flesh wound in the movies, but an inch closer to his belly button might have killed him,” Gary replied. “We’ve gone a long time without anyone getting hurt. I guess we were just lucky.”

“That’s an understatement,” Ray said. “All the crap you boys pulled since I joined up should have gotten a dozen people killed.”

### **Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 4 – A Time to Heal & Learn**

“How are you feeling today Derek?” Gary asked.

“It hurts, but I’ll be ok,” Derek replied.

“What’s it feel like to get shot?” Gary asked.

“You got shot,” Derek said.

“No, I got hit in the head by a rock, that’s not the same thing,” Gary reminded Derek.

“I don’t know how to explain it then,” Derek shook his head. “At first I didn’t feel anything and then it began to burn like fire. I knew I was hit, it almost spun me completely around, but I don’t know what to say. Just don’t try to find out for yourself, ok?”

“I think I could live with that piece of advice, son,” Gary laughed at his unintended irony.

“When are we going to do the next operation?” Derek asked.

“You’re going to sit it out until you’re healed,” Gary admonished Derek. “We’re going to sit tight until Ryan and Jennifer get here. Then, we’re going to be extra careful scoping this next target out.”

“It’s a long way from here,” Derek said, “It’s at 5300 Maryland Way, Brentwood, TN. That’s south of town. It must be 20 miles from here.”

“Do you happen to have the office number and phone number too?” Gary asked.

“It’s Suite 200,” Derek said, “But I can’t remember the phone number.”

“Huh, not are you not only not bulletproof, you’ve got a memory problem. You’re a chip off the old block, kid,” Gary smiled.

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“How’s he doing today, Gary,” Clarence asked.

“He’s ok. It’s only a flesh wound. Go visit him. He might appreciate the company,” Gary suggested.

“You ask him where the AT office is?” Ron asked.

“He volunteered,” Gary replied. “Say’s it’s on the other side of Nashville about 20 miles from here.”

“When we go to that building, we’d better check the office location, too” Ron suggested.

“Suite 200, partner,” Gary said, “ought to be easy enough for us to find.

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“We didn’t expect you for 2 more days, Ryan,” Gary said, “What did you do, drive straight through?”

“Mary said that Derek might need some of the medical supplies that you didn’t have,” Ryan explained, “So we only stopped one night.”

“Have any trouble?” Gary asked.

“Got some strange looks and got tailed a couple of times by the cops,” Ryan answered. “Showed them the badge and told them I was transporting a doctor to treat a patient. Never actually had to say I was a Marshal so I didn’t really lie to their faces. I’m not a very good liar.”

“That’s ok Ryan,” Gary smiled, “The three of us make up for it.”

“How’s Derek?” Ryan asked.

“That’s what Jennifer is here to find out,” Gary responded, “But it appears to be only a flesh wound.”

“Those really hurt sometimes,” Ryan suggested.

“He been on morphine, so he hasn’t been in any pain,” Gary related.

“I’m sure that Jennifer will put a stop to that,” Ryan said, “It doesn’t do any good after a while without increasing the dosage.”

“I know that from 1st hand experience,” Gary admitted, “But, he should be well enough by now to get off it anyway.”

“Well,” Jennifer said when she came out a few minutes later, “He’s going to be fine. Sammy did a first rate job. Blood pressure is normal, no fever and the wounds look good. The drainage is starting to clear, so I’ll pull the drain tube in a day or so. You really didn’t need me here, but if you men are going to go around getting yourselves shot up, I’m glad that I am.”

“Hopefully, it was a fluke,” Gary replied. “But I feel better having you here. We’ve held off doing anything until we had a doctor available.”

“I’ll take Derek’s place for now,” Ryan offered.

“Thanks Ryan, but at the moment, all we’re going to do is gather Intel,” Gary acknowledged. “We’ve sort of lost the taste for blood. We managed to take out that building in Bowling Green without hurting anyone.”

“Except Derek,” Jennifer reminded him.

“Like I said, that was a fluke. It could have been poor Intel or maybe the guard just finished up his rounds early. Either way, we’re going to have a lot better Intel before our next strike.”

“I certainly hope so,” Jennifer said, “A half inch further in and he might not have made it.”

“Don’t I know,” Gary agreed.

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When they found the office in Brentwood, the first thing they did was to go to the office and pick up some of the new brochures on the new AWB. The AT was no longer responsible, but they still distributed the brochures, perhaps out of habit. FEMA was still struggling to get organized. But then there was a lot wrong with the government, beginning with the Department of Homeland Security. Not one ATF agent left the AT when the Firearms went under control of FEMA.

And, until they started to cut the Bureau, none of them intended to either. That bombing up in Bowling Green didn’t make a lot of sense, either. When they handled firearms, someone was always criticizing the Bureau, but they weren’t responsible for firearms anymore. It was nice that those three old guys were respectful of the new law and got the pamphlets about the new AWB. They probably had shotguns or something to turn in. Oh, most certainly, Gary, Ron and Clarence couldn’t wait to give FEMA their guns. Or, at least the parts that came out when they pulled the triggers. But first, they had to get cigarettes down to a more reasonable \$30 per carton.

Gary remembered a poster that used to be posted in the state stores in Iowa years before. A bottle of liquor that cost the state \$1.92 retailed for \$5. No wonder the state had been in the liquor business. And, the generic cigarettes that were identical to Marlboro’s were \$10 less per carton in 2004 and still only \$10 less per carton. Someone was getting rich off their bad habits.

“It looks to me like it’s straight in and out,” Clarence said. “All we have to do is figure out the guard schedule and we’re good to go.”

“I don’t know,” Gary replied, “I want a lot more information before we hit.”

“What do you need to know besides the guard schedule?” Ron asked.



“Do the police patrol regularly? If so, when? Are there people watching the building at nights that we’re not aware of? What’s the response time of the police if they have an alarm system and it’s set off? Shall I go on?” Gary asked.

“You’re getting cautious in your old age,” Ron allowed.

“Wasn’t your kid that got shot Ronald and I don’t want anyone else shot either,” Gary retorted strongly.

“We’ll just send Ray and Ryan back tonight to check out the nighttime activities and note the police schedule,” Gary said. “We can find out the other things by throwing a rock through a window.”

“Won’t that alert them?” Clarence asked.

“They may just think that someone doesn’t know that Firearms are FEMA now,” Gary replied. “Either way, we’ll know about the alarm system.”

“Did you have Ryan and Jennifer bring the vests?” Ron asked.

“I thought we had them on one of those trucks Ron, really,” Gary explained. “But yes, Ryan brought them.”

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“Here’s what I want the two of you to do,” Gary explained to Ray and Ryan. “Use the night vision stuff and check the place out closely from a distance. If it’s clear, move in for a closer look. Note all police patrols and the times they pass by the building. See if they have a night guard and what his schedule is. Around 3am, toss a rock through a window and layback someplace safe and watch. You’d better go armed for bear and be sure to wear the vests, with the plates. This is a recon mission guys, so don’t take any unnecessary chances.”

“How long are we going to go down there and check on the cops before we strike?” Ray asked.

“I’m not sure Ray, a week, maybe 10 days,” Gary answered.

“Aren’t you being overly cautious?” Ray asked.

“Would you feel the same way if it had been you that had gotten shot instead of Derek?” Gary asked.

“Ten days is good,” Ray agreed.

Ray and Ryan arrived after dark and started out ½ mile from the building. They didn't see anything to be alarmed about and moved to a ¼ mile away. Apparently there were no extra guards. A police cruiser went by and Ray noted the time: 9:27. They moved across the street from the building and saw a guard sitting at a table drinking something from a thermos and reading a paper. At 10:00 he put down the paper, picked up a time clock and left. He was back at 10:12.

At 10:32, a patrol car went by again and Ray added that to his notes. At 11:01, the guard repeated his routine. Give or take 2 or 3 minutes that went on until 3am. Five minutes after the guard left, Ryan tossed a rock through a window and beat a hasty retreat. The guard showed up in 3 minutes flat. A patrol car did not appear until the regular time, approximately 3:30. However, the car did stop and talk with the guard. Apparently he had been talking to them when he'd made that phone call. A short time later a service vehicle showed up and replaced the window. The police did not depart until the building was secure. This left an open question. How long did it take the police to respond if the guard put in an emergency call?

“So tonight, we need to get the guard to summon the cops in a hurry. How about I toss a hand grenade near the front of the building?” Ray suggested.

“If you think it's safe, go for it,” Gary agreed with Ron and Clarence nodding their heads in agreement. “However, tomorrow night, Ryan and you start all over from a ½ mile out, Ray. They might bring in a SWAT Team or something if you do the grenade tonight.”

“Ok Gary, I suppose it won't hurt to be cautious,” Ray agreed.

That night was a repetition of the night before. The cops came by around on the half hour and the guard made his rounds on the hour. At 3:15, after the guard had returned, Ray rolled a MK3A2 hand grenade towards the front door. The MK3A2 offensive hand grenade, commonly referred to as the concussion grenade, is designed to produce casualties during close combat while minimizing danger to friendly personnel. The grenade is also used for concussion effects in enclosed areas, for blasting, or for demolition tasks. The shock waves (overpressure) produced by this grenade when used in enclosed areas are greater than those produced by the fragmentation grenade. It is, therefore, very effective against enemy soldiers located in bunkers, buildings, and fortified areas.

It went off with one hell of a bang, cracking some of the windows. The guard pulled the phone down to the floor and dialed. 7 minutes later, a half-dozen squad cars pulled in code 3. They did a search of the area and two of the cars remained until the glass was replaced around dawn.

“We won't have a lot of time if the cops get called,” Ray reported. “It only took them 7 minutes to respond.”

“Check it out tonight and be very careful, Ray,” Gary replied. “Like I said, check for a

SWAT Team or any extra guards.”

### Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 5 – 2 Down and 1 To Go

That night Ryan and Ray started checking on the office from ½ mile away. Ray thought he spotted something but wasn't sure. They sat tight. The police patrols were the same, on the half hour, but they seemed to slow each time they passed the office building where the AT office was. Just before 11pm, a black van pulled up near the building and 6 men got out. They entered the building across the street, but seemed to leave about 10 minutes later. Ray told Ryan to sit tight. Around 3:15, Ray finally caught a guy on the roof that had stood up and scanned the area with his own night vision binoculars. They waited until the guy settled back down and cautiously departed the area.

"You were right Gary," Ray said. "They had a Team of some kind on the roof across the street. Probably SWAT, they were all dressed in black."

"Check it out again tonight from the same distance, Ray," Gary suggested. "If they are there, call it a night and come back."

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That night, the only difference was that the SWAT Team arrived about 5 minutes earlier. They repeated the process for 7 nights until a SWAT Truck didn't appear at 11:00. Erring on the side of caution, Ray and Ryan sat tight and left at midnight. The next night, there was no SWAT Truck again and they decided to move in to a ¼ mile out.

They didn't see anything, but favoring caution, left and returned to the trailer park around 1:00. The following night, they repeated the routine at ½ mile and ¼ mile and eventually moved to within sight of the building. They kept a sharp lookout for anyone in the area who was out of place, but saw no one. The guard was still doing his on the hour routine and the patrol cars came by on the half hour. Ryan pointed out that they weren't slowing as they had before. Ray decided that it wouldn't get any better than this and around 4:00 returned to the trailer park.

"If we're going to do this thing, I say we do it tonight," Ray proposed.

"How sure are you that SWAT won't be back?" Gary asked.

"No way I can guarantee that Gary," Ray said, "But what reason would they have to come back? There hasn't been any more trouble at the building and they probably just hung it up. I would have after a week."

"Ok. We'll use tape, like before, but I think a glass cutter might be quieter than breaking the window," Gary said. "However, before we do this, I want one of you to actually visit that office so you know exactly where it is located. You realized that at best you have maybe an 8-minute window. And, if that guard hears anything, he will probably just dial 911."

"I guess that means we have about a 6 minute window then," Ray replied. "The cops took 7 minutes to get there and we need some time to clear the building."

"Fine, 6 minutes, Ray," Gary agreed. "And Ray, if the guard gets wind of you being in the building, shoot him, please."

"Ok, I agree Gary, if we see the guard, he's history," Ray said.

"How big a bomb are we going to use?" Gary asked.

"Well, that depends on the office doesn't it?" Ray replied. "Since I'll be making the bomb, I'll check out the office. Five pounds of C-4 or less, I'd imagine."

Ray and Ryan got some sleep and got up around noon to drive down to the AT office. Ryan waited in the pickup while Ray went upstairs and picked up a FEMA brochure on the AWB. He took a quick glance around when he entered and that was all he needed. To look around a second time might attract attention. He went down and got in the pickup and Ryan and he left. Ray should have taken that second glance; he missed the explosives detector that the AT had installed. They had, however, put in an alarm on the door and he did notice that.

"We're going to use 5 pounds," Ray said. "It might be a little heavy handed, but not so much that it will make a big difference."

"3am?" Gary asked.

"Works for me," Ray said.

That night, at 2:55am Ryan and Ray pulled their pickup alongside the building and left the motor running. They got out of the vehicle and moved near the door. When the guard got up to do his rounds at 3:02, they waited 1 minute and slapped the tape on. The glasscutter worked fine, it was new, and they removed a circle from the bottom panel of the door about 2' across. Ray led the way and Ryan held back a few feet to cover his rear. Ray shoved a pry bar into the AT door and tossed in the backpack with the 5 pounds of C-4, immediately setting off the explosives detector. The detector was a local system, intended only to alert the AT and/or the building guard. They had missed one other thing too, but it was too late now.

When the alarm went off, the guard reached for the police walkie-talkie on his belt and reported that he had an explosives alarm activation in the AT office. The dispatcher immediately put out a code 3 broadcast and notified the bomb squad. The guard had done his job and he was no fool, he raced to the front door and just about had the door unlocked when Ray and Ryan came down the stairs and around the corner. Ray didn't hesitate, he swung up the MP5/10SD6 and let loose with a volley. The guard had heard them coming down the stairs and he ducked. And, he didn't waste time reaching for that service pistol either; he went out the door and made a quick left turn, running as fast as

his legs would carry him. Ray and Ryan ran out the blasted away door and made a right turn and jumped in the idling pickup. They were less than a block south of the building when the first cruiser pulled in. Ray had noted that the police came from the east and west the first time and he was playing a hunch.

The police stayed away from the building waiting for the bomb squad to show up. The bomb only had a 5 minute timer and the AT office went up well before the bomb squad arrived. Meanwhile, Ryan and Ray made their way back to the trailer park. That had been too close. It was all in the details and two details had almost cost them big time and something they couldn't have accounted for had saved their butts. Ray had missed the explosives detector and they had both missed the police walkie-talkie. Only the fact that the guard wasn't about to stay in a building after the detector went off had saved their butts. That and the fact that he'd turned left and they'd turned right. The second building was down and no one was hurt. However it had been a close one and they now knew changes that needed to be made before they went for building number 3.

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"Son of a Beach," Gary said. "How did you miss that explosives detector? And the police radio?"

"I didn't have that long to look around guys," Ray explained. "Next time, you are going to have to send someone in who has an excuse to look around a little longer. As far as the radio goes, we simply missed it. But we won't make that mistake again. Overall, this plan was a success. All we have to do is a little fine tuning and the next one will go off without a hitch."

"Fair enough, I guess," Gary agreed, "But its mistakes that get people killed and I do not want anyone killed on our side or their side, if we can help it. The guards are fair game IF the situation demands it, but that's the beginning and end of it. No one on our side is fair game. I'd rather pass on a target than get any of our people killed. And if the only way we can take down a target is to absolutely kill someone, we'll just pass on that target. The thing about luck is that it eventually runs out. The next target is Louisville and it could be our hardest target yet. We'll hang around for a couple of days and then begin taking off one or two at a time. Everyone will meet up at the KOA at 900 Marriott Dr, Clarksville, IN. It's called the Louisville Metro KOA and it's less than 4 miles from our next target. When everyone gets there, just sit tight and enjoy the sights.

"You know, the BAT still has all of those agents they had when they were the BATFE," Gary continued. "I don't know what kind of opinion you might have of them and I don't care. But people, they are real Law Enforcement Officers; don't kid yourself about that. They got heavy handed sometimes, and I'd be the first one to point that out. But they aren't amateurs. That explosives detector should prove that to you if nothing else. Do not take them lightly, especially since we've taken down 2 offices. Remember, this is all about getting the federal government to lower the price of cigarettes, nothing more and nothing less.

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Moving by ones and twos, it took them some time to reassemble in Louisville. They mostly moved in ones and they didn't head straight to Louisville. It was nearly a month later before they were ready to even consider the next operation. The news media was making much ado over the two bombings and had cast dispersions on nearly every group in the country, even the Palmdale Militia. And, the three old geezers had heard their names mentioned several times. And remember TV was back on the air and they had those mug shots from Flagstaff. The old men stayed in their trailers and let someone else drive. They, of course, traveled as a threesome; no one was breaking up this team.

They couldn't put in an appearance at the Louisville AT office, so they did the next best thing; they sent their wives. The story was that the husband one of the women had died and they wanted information about what they were allowed to keep and what they weren't allowed to keep. They were a sympatric group and the AT agents gave them brochures and slowly and carefully explained everything them. These women must not know diddly about guns one of the agents assumed, they kept asking the same questions again and again. But finally, the women seemed to understand and assured the agent helping them that they would turn in that nasty old Winchester model 1886 carbine. They even allowed the agent to see their driver's licenses and write down their names.

All the while, the miniature video cam that looked like a broach panned the room and the wires running down the inside of Linda's coat and to the radio which sent the signal to the recorder in her oversized purse. When the ladies got back Linda told Ronald that was the first and last time for that. She had to act like she didn't know the difference between a rifle and a shotgun and it was just plain demeaning. And, Sharon was more angry than Linda. She knew as much about Gary's old gun collection as Gary did and found it very difficult not to properly describe a lever action rifle. She kept saying thingy and the agent kept saying lever and he'd made her feel positively dumb.

Ray pointed out the explosives detector on the video and the alarm system. This office would be a tough nut to crack he said. They probably learned from the Nashville incident too and the explosives detector no doubt sent a silent alarm to the police station. A police station he pointed out that was only about 4 minutes away from the office. He was willing to give it a go, he said, but this was the last one.

And, they were going to have to do it on a federal holiday when the building was certain to be empty. That also presented a problem he said. The next federal holiday, Columbus Day, was not that far off and they might be expecting something on a federal holiday. It would be better he said to wait for the following federal holiday, Veteran's Day or the one after, Thanksgiving. Veteran's Day was Friday, November 11, 2011 and Thanksgiving was Thursday, November 24, 2011.

It was decided to skip Columbus Day, and see what the feds did. Then, if they saw the same activity on or around Veteran's Day they skip to Thanksgiving. If Thanksgiving was also subject to great federal attention, they'd just skip the whole thing, no one wanted to make the attack on the federal holiday after that, Christmas Day. That would most surely back fire and even Thanksgiving posed that risk. They'd play that by ear if it got that far. Meanwhile Ryan and Ray were to resume the surveillance activities just like they'd used in Nashville. Derek was healing nicely and depending upon when the attack was made, he might be one of the participants. However it went, it was time to take a vacation and then shift their activities to FEMA who was finally starting to get their act together. That was, of course, unless Congress actually approved the proposed changes to the AWB that were currently being hotly debated. Under those revisions, the AWB would revert to the original version passed in 1994. It wasn't perfect, but they could live with it.

And about that pass on Christmas, an explosion might be perfect if they did it during the 1812 Overture, but somehow it just didn't go with "Oh Holy Night". Gary was old school and when he was in High School they still did Religious Christmas Productions every Christmas at the High School with real religious music. He was one of the 3 Kings and was myrrh; Myrrh is mine; it's bitter perfume; Breathes a life of gathering gloom; Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, Sealed in the stone cold tomb. That was in the 1950's you know. But now, since the courts had seemed to have made religion a sin and banned it from schools... Anyway, old Gar-Bear wasn't about to mess up the Holy Night. He might be a stone cold killer of crooked politicians, but in his heart, he was a Christian. I know, I know, it's an oxymoron, and St. Peter probably will point downward, but...

Security was tighter than a tick on a hound dog on Columbus Day, just as expected. And Veteran's Day wasn't much better. They had all of their information and they even had a plan, but they needed the opportunity. It finally came at Thanksgiving. It came with really mixed emotions too. But there was no security evident and they had checked closely. And, they weren't going to break into the building and risk anyone's life. Not theirs and not the poor guard who had to work on Thanksgiving. They had just what they needed with them, but it would take 5 of them this time. It was going to be Derek and the 4 cousins and Derek was the driver.

At 2:30am on Thanksgiving morning, the 5 of them drove to the building across the street from the AT office. They got out of the truck, removed their solution from the back of the truck and shouldered the weapons. On the count of 3, the cousins discharged the AT-4 rockets through the windows of the AT office. They slid back into the pickup and were 4 blocks away before the police even began to respond. By the time they arrived at the KOA, the police were at the building and the fire department was on the way. They slipped off their clothes and went to bed. This project was over.



### Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 6 – Home For The Holidays

The day after Thanksgiving was still the day that people started the Christmas shopping, so they took advantage of all of the local traffic and slipped out of Louisville. They made their ways back to the Underground City and were home by December 1st.

“Sure would be nice to be back in Palmdale for the holidays,” Clarence observed.

“Even the ranch would be better than this mine,” Ron agreed.

“Guys, the old saying is that home is where the heart is,” Gary reminded them. “We’re together and among friends.”

“Congress didn’t get that AWB change passed before they went home for the holidays,” Clarence reminded Gary. “So come the New Year are you planning on dealing with those FEMA people?”

“Oh yeah,” Gary smiled. “This last attack on the AT was smooth as silk, I should have thought of those AT-4s before.”

Washington DC...

“I’m just saying that if you can’t get that Firearms Division organized by January 1, I am going back to Congress and ask them to change the law and put Firearms back with Alcohol and Tobacco, Mr. Secretary,” the President explained, exhausted with the debate.

“Mr. President, give me a break,” the DHS Secretary protested, “It’s those ATF agents all refusing to transfer to FEMA that’s part of the problem. And let’s face it, FEMA is the last bastion for liberals in the country and what do liberals know about guns?”

“Exactly my point Mr. Secretary,” the President continued. “It’s an Assault Weapons Ban, not a slingshot ban or a bow and arrow ban. These people of yours are taking everything too literally. Beside, do you really need 1,400 pages of regulations to implement this ban?”

“I suppose not, but my people just sort of got on a roll and, well, you know,” the Secretary tried to explain.

“And, what about those 3 attacks on the AT offices?” the President asked.

“That’s the responsibility of the FBI,” the DHS Secretary protested.

“But my people tell me that they used AT-4 rockets in that last attack,” the President said, “And those AT-4s are your responsibility. I think I’ve heard enough. I’m going to issue an Executive Order right now. Forget January 1st. I’m going to transfer Firearms back to the AT temporarily and ask Congress to change the law immediately. I think that

you and your people are just in over your heads on this one.”

“Yes Mr. President,” the Secretary regrettably accepted the pronouncement.

“And by the way,” the President said, “That fricking bureau of incompetents tells me that those attacks had to do with the price of cigarettes, and nothing to do with the gun laws. They also tell me that their prime suspects are those three old geezers from California. The Director told me that they were the only people in the country crazy enough and wily enough to be able to pull something like this off.”

“You can always blame that on Nelson, Mr. President,” the DHS Security suggested, “He’s the one who gave them all of those munitions.”

“They probably used them to shoot down Air Force One,” President Costello admitted.

“Had to be their people Mr. President, they were in jail at the time,” the Secretary pointed out.

“All I know is that they’ve fallen off the face of the earth,” Costello said, “These guys have really gone underground.”

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Even Presidents get some things right.

The Underground City...the Day after Christmas...

“Since the President transferred Firearms back to AT and they’re the ATF again, are we going after FEMA or the ATF?” Ron asked.

“Well, ATF is on full alert Ronald,” Gary observed, “We’d better lay off them for a while, don’t you think?”

“What I think,” Clarence said, “It that this President Costello is a cheap SOB. He’s only offering a \$10 million reward for us. But, that mug shot of me is right handsome, wouldn’t you all agree?”

“I think that he knows where we are,” Ron scoffed. “You heard him Gary, he said we’d really gone underground.”

“I think,” Gary paused for effect, “That it was just a figure of speech Ronald. We used the alias’s to form the corporation and there’s nothing to connect us to this mine.”

“But Gary,” Clarence said, “Doesn’t the name Freedom Rider’s Inc. sort of waves a red flag saying here we are, come and get us?”

“So pick a new name and put in a dba,” Gary said, “We can be Pacifist’s Inc. for all I care. ‘What’s in a name?’ Shakespeare’s Juliet asked. *That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet.* Do whatever you want.”

“Still showing off, huh?” Ron said, “I wish my Dad could have paid for me to get a Master’s Degree and go to law school.”

“I quit law school Ronald,” Gary reminded. “Gave me ulcers and made me hate attorneys.”

“We’re off the subject here,” Ron said. “Are we going after FEMA or the ATF?”

“Nope,” Gary replied. “FEMA is just a puppet; we’re going after the puppet master, the Department of Homeland Security. We’ll just see how secure our homeland is. But first we have to get organized guys. We can’t get halfway across the country and realize we forgot the vests or left the AT-4s in California. Start making a list of what you think we need to take with us.”

“What’s with Gary and all these lists?” Clarence asked Ron later.

“Gar-Bear is obsessive-compulsive, and that’s just one of the symptoms,” Ron laughed.

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Al Capone started it. Wesley Clark reminded us. Gar-Bear was going to make sure that Valentine’s Day would be a Holiday that everyone remembered. On the 7th anniversary of Clark’s aborted coup, the Secretary of Homeland Security would wish he were the Secretary of the Interior. There was the Homeland Security National Center for Food Protection and Defense up in Minnesota, the National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense down in Texas and the Homeland Security Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events at the University of Southern California. It would mean dividing their forces, but, if the University of Minnesota, Texas A&M and USC wanted to get in bed with the government; they had no one to blame but themselves. And, what business did Universities have doing government business anyway? The University of California sure did screw up handling Lawrence Livermore Laboratory and Los Alamos National Laboratory.

“Ronald you take Texas, Clarence can take California and I’m going to Minnesota,” Gary outlined. “Find those Homeland Security facilities and blow them up.”

“When are we going to do this?” Clarence asked.

“Valentine’s Day,” Gary responded. “Al Capone and Wesley Clark were amateurs compared to what I have in mind.”

“But they’re just Universities,” Ron protested.

“On the government payroll,” Gary countered. “But, we’ll do it at night to try and keep the casualties down. Anyway, we have our assignments. Let’s get these locations scouted out and blow them up.”

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Washington DC...

When Congress returned from recess, they moved the Firearms control back to the AT and finally passed a reasonable bill on Assault Weapons, returning to the original law but without the sunset clauses. And they cut the federal tax on cigarettes by  $\frac{1}{3}$  and the taxes on alcohol by  $\frac{2}{3}$ . The President reluctantly signed both pieces of legislation. He claimed that he didn’t know how the federal government was going to manage and recommended that Congress raise the Estate Tax to 90% with no exemptions.

The good news was that the cities devastated by the Chinese attack were mostly rebuilt. And, the Muslims hadn’t attacked, so obviously the Department of Homeland Security and the USA Patriot Act were doing what they were intended to do. Uh, Mr. President, the war with the Muslims has been going on since the Crusades. Maybe they’re just reorganizing or something. Hadn’t you better replace all those ships we lost and build up the Army to a full 15 Divisions again? We only have 7 Divisions left since that Chinese thing and a lot of those ships need to be serviced. Peace dividends are more like deferred taxes. They come back to haunt you!

Texas...

Ronald finally figured out that the DHS operation was part of the College of Veterinary Medicine. He tracked down the specific offices involved in the DHS project and had them checked out. There wasn’t any security whatsoever beyond the normal campus security. They could hit the College Station offices with impunity and late at night, avoid casualties entirely. Well, the campus cops might take a hit, but if they did it right, maybe no one would get hurt. He simply didn’t have enough people to hit all the locations at once. The 4 cousins were with him, but there were 8 offices to knock out. Even if he participated, and he was a little old for that sort of thing, they’d have to either limit the numbers of offices they hit with the rockets or double up.

“Why don’t we just plant bombs in four of the offices and use rockets on the other four?” Jim asked. “This is a college for crying out loud. Everyone leaves backpacks lying around all of the time.”

“But what if someone steals the backpacks?” Ron asked.

“We can put them in lockers or something,” Jim suggested.

“Ok, we’ll do it that way Jim,” Ron said. “Now remember, Gar-Bear wanted this thing to go down right at 4am. He’s going to take out the University of Minnesota offices at the same time and Clarence is going to hit USC at 2am Pacific. If the blasts aren’t coordinated, DHS might think they are isolated incidents.”

“Ok, 4am Ron,” Jim said, “We wouldn’t dare do it any later; there would be too many students around.”

Minneapolis...

Fortunately for Gary, the U of M program was housed in a single office on one of the 2 Twin-city campuses. There was virtually no security; apparently these colleges didn’t take security very seriously. There were the campus police, but no guards on any of the buildings. Gary brought Damon and Derek with him to handle this affair. The only dispute they were having was about how big of a bomb to use for the office. Damon wanted to use 25 pounds of C-4, but Derek said that might destroy the building, not just the office. Gary opted to take Derek’s advice, but he let Damon build a 25-pound bomb and quietly told Derek to take out 20 pounds of the C-4 before he planted it. Maybe Gary should have been a politician, he could be 2 faced when he needed to be.

Damon figured his Dad would just tell Derek to take out some of the C-4, so he would add a 10-pound enhancement to Derek’s bomb. Derek was wrong about just using 5-pounds, but assuming he pulled 20-pounds from the bomb, that would still make a 15-pound bomb. He just had to be sure to add the C-4 to the bomb after Derek planted it. On the afternoon of February 13th, Damon followed Derek to the office and saw him put his bomb in a storage cabinet. After Derek left, Damon added the 10-pounds of C-4. Those 8 little sticks should make quite a difference.

Los Angeles...

The Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events (CREATE) was located at USC’s Viterbi School of Engineering. Seemed like the government couldn’t create any agency without making a cute acronym out of its name. Clarence’s people kind of stood out at USC, they neither looked Jewish or Asian. But, they located the office without much trouble and a single bomb would do the trick. This bomb would require 6 sticks of the C-4, but it wouldn’t do anything more than wipe out the office. Ryan slipped in and placed the bomb around 6pm on February 13th.

0200PST...14Feb12...

The bombs exploded within moments of each other. In Texas, the cousins let the AT-4s fly at the very moment the bombs went off, just adding to the chaos. In Minnesota, the extra 10-pounds of C-4 so structurally weakened the building that the third floor collapsed on the second floor and brought it to the ground. It was just a good thing there was no one in the building... In Los Angeles, the bomb was the perfect size and by the time it went off, Ray, Ryan and Clarence were already back at the Underground City.

### Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 7 – Spring Vacation

“Now that’s more like it!” Clarence smiled, “The President upped the reward to \$25 million.”

“I just hope that Ron and Gary and the guys don’t have any trouble getting back here,” Ray said, “The idea of declaring martial law seems a little extreme to me.”

“They’ll be ok,” Clarence assured Ray, “They took lots of money with them and this is America. You can buy your way out of any kind of trouble.”

“Martha Stewart couldn’t,” Ray laughed.

“Alan Dershowitz said that it was her own fault,” Clarence reminded Ray, “If she would have taken the 5th, they wouldn’t have convicted her of anything.”

“Are all attorneys’ Jewish Clarence?” Ray asked.

“Nah, man, they’re actors and accountants and bankers and businessmen and comics and doctors and educators and financial consultants and geologists and hotel managers and insurance brokers and...”

“I get the idea Clarence,” Ray said. “You don’t have to go all the way to Z.”

“Well, Ray, you have to realize that those folks are heavy into the professions,” Clarence said, “What Jewish Mother would want to say my son the deliveryman or my daughter the hooker?”

“I don’t know, Heidi’s mom?” Ray laughed.

o

It took Ron four days to get back to California and Gary a full week. It was time to lay low for a while and take their spring break. They had to see how this bombing impacted on the DHS and the Secretary. The word was that the President wasn’t too happy with the Secretary. He’d already taken Firearms back and returned it to the Treasury Department. And, if Costello did fire him, the Department would be messed up big time until the new Secretary was selected, approved, sworn-in and got his feet wet. That could take months.

*“I’m back in the saddle again, out where a...”* Ron sang.

“Shut up Ronald,” Gary said, “Who ever told you that you could sing?”

“I’m a regular Paganini,” Ron said.

“Like hell partner,” Gary said, “Pavarotti is a tenor; Paganini was a composer.”

“You didn’t know that,” Ron said, “You saw that in the movies.”

“So what?” Gary asked, “It’s true.”

“Now that the ATF is the ATFE again,” Clarence said, “Who we gonna pick on?”

“We’ve barely scratched the surface with the DHS,” Gary replied. “If Costello fires the Secretary, they’re going to be so disorganized that we can do whatever we want. How much C-4 do we have left? We might need more.”

“Derek said we had 2,500 of those sticks left, so over a ton and a half,” Ron said. “That’s enough C-4 to blow up the world.”

“Maybe not the world Ron,” But we might take a crack at Mt. Weather,” Gary suggested. “I was looking at their website and it has a pretty clear picture of the place. As far as explosives go, I pulled my Handbook off the shelf and looked it up. C-4 is 1.34 times as powerful as TNT; I’ll give you the formulas so you can figure things for yourself.”

“The ‘minimum safe distance for personnel in the open’ for demolitions is 77 meters times the cube root of the weight of the TNT in kilos. For C-4 its 85 meters times the cube root of the weight of C-4 in kilos. So for a 200kg C-4 explosion we’re talking 500 meters. Now, that’s just for people, and I assume it includes a healthy safety margin. Buildings aren’t going to be leveled all the way out,” Gary continued.

“Incidentally, cutting down a foot-thick tree takes  $\frac{3}{8}$  kg of C-4 if you do it the smart way; nearly 4x as much if you just tie it next to the trunk,” Gary smiled. “Now for the reinforced concrete wall. The handbook doesn’t give an explicit case for blowing a hole in the ceiling, probably because folks aren’t supposed to do anything quite that stupid. But for a wall the charge of TNT in pounds (divide by 3 for C-4 in Kg) is given by the formula  $P=KCR^3$ , where R is breaching radius in feet (thickness), K is the material factor, and C is the Tamping Factor. The number of charges used is  $N=W/(2R)$  where W is the width of the breach.”

“C ranges from 1 to 3.6 depending on how well tamped the explosive is; 2.0 is pretty easy. For a ceiling tamping is not easy, so let’s call it 3.6. K ranges from 0.07 for earth, up to 1.76 for small holes in reinforced concrete. The values for reinforced concrete are:

..R.....K..
1’ or less...1.76
1’-3’.....0.96
3’-5’.....0.80
5’-7’.....0.63
7’ or more...0.54

So if it's 1 foot of reinforced concrete the charge size is  $(1.76 \cdot 3.6 \cdot 1^3)/3 = 2\text{kg}/\text{charge}$ , and for a 4' wide breach you need  $4/(2 \cdot 1) = 2$  charges. So 4kg of C4 will do it. If it's 2' of reinforced concrete you'll need  $(0.96 \cdot 3.6 \cdot 2^3)/3 = 9\text{kg}$  in a single charge. Note that this only blasts away the concrete; it doesn't cut the reinforcing steel, but depending on what mesh was used in creating the building you may be able to squeeze or torch your way through that easily enough, although possibly not before someone comes to find out what the hell that incredibly loud noise is. Note that if you can place the charges \*inside\* the concrete by inserting them through the pipe you can get a much better C-factor, like 1.0. So that would drop your charge size to a little over a kilo for 1' of concrete, 2.5kg for 2', 45kg for 6'," he concluded.

"I knowed you'd get in trouble reading books," Clarence said, "Can you translate all that into English?"

"He said to use 2 sticks of C-4 per foot of concrete and stay a long ways away, partner," Ron laughed. "Then get out your cutting torch and cut away the rebar.

"I knowed that Ron," Clarence replied, "I was just checking to see if you understood. But I reckon I'll just use 3 sticks of C-4 and skip the cutting torch."

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So, after the spring break was over, they were going to attack Mt. Weather, huh? The way that place was guarded they would be lucky to get within a mile. On the other hand, if FEMA fell into chaos, maybe they'd forget to pay the guards or something. Besides, they had plenty of weapons with ranges of over a mile. Maybe they could just attack the place and FEMA would button up and they could see if it took 2 sticks of C-4 per foot of concrete. Besides, until the Prez cancelled martial law, it wasn't safe to travel. It had been a bear getting back to California.

*What was it that guy had said? Oh yeah, The mountain's "real secrets" are protected by warning signs, 10 foot-high chain link fences, razor wire, and armed guards. Curious motorists and hikers on the Appalachian Trail are relieved of their sketching pads and cameras and sent on their way. Security is tight. Mount Weather is the self-sustaining underground command center for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The facility is the operational center – the hub – of approximately 100 other Federal Relocation Centers, most of which are concentrated in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina. Together this network of underground facilities constitutes the backbone of America's "Continuity of Government" program. In the event of nuclear war, declaration of martial law, or other national emergency, the President, his cabinet and the rest of the Executive Branch would be "relocated" to Mount Weather.*

That description surely didn't square with the picture on the website. What were all of those buildings about? There was only one way to find out of course, they would simply have to travel to Virginia and do a little recon; just as soon as the Prez cancelled martial



law.

“You got those lists ready?” Gary asked.

“We just used the last list Gar-Bear,” Ron replied, “Except we added on some rockets and increased the explosives a little.”

“How little and how many are some?” Gary wanted to know.

“Well we have 567 kilos of C-4, that’s 1,000 sticks, and 2 dozen AT-4s,” Ron replied.

“We’re going to have to take the dune buggy’s,” Gary announced, “From the picture, this looks like a mighty big place to move around. And it’s all supposed to be underground, so we’re going to have to do more than take out a few buildings.”

“Maybe we’d better take ½ the C-4,” Ron mused, “If it’s underground like you say, it might be hard to get into.”

“I don’t intend to try and get into the place,” Gary explained. “You’re probably right. It might take an A-bomb to penetrate their defenses. On the other hand, it might be easy to keep them from getting out of the place once they’re all nicely tucked in. I expect they got blast doors and the like, what about if we just weld them shut?”

“I’d never thought of it in that way,” Ron said, “Now that could work if they don’t have some sort of escape tunnel or something.”

“If you built a complex like that would you put in an escape tunnel?” Gary asked.

“You’re darn tooting I would,” Ron replied.

“I would too, Ronald,” Gary agreed, “So we’re just going to have to find those escape tunnels and block them too.”

“How are we going to do that?” Ron asked.

“Well hell partner, if the feds can use ground penetrating radar (gpr) on us, we can use it on them,” Gary smiled. “We just got to figure where to get some of that equipment.”

“The USMS must have it,” Clarence suggested, “We need to go to LA.”

“Nope, we’ll just stop by one of their regional offices on the way to Virginia,” Gary said. “One gpr is as good as another gpr, right?”

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*The President announced today that he is increasing the reward on the three men sus-*

*pected in the bombings of the three campuses, the announcer said. Apparently no one has come forward to reveal where Olsen, Green and Rawlings are hiding. The reward has been increased to a total of \$50 million. As a point of reference, the reward on Osama bin Laden remains at \$25 million and the government previously paid out \$100 million in rewards for the discovery of the hostages and the arrests of these same three men.*

*In the opinions of some, mostly those radical right wing militant groups, these men are patriots. This reporter cannot agree with those assessments. These are clearly dangerous terrorists. Admittedly, no one has been seriously injured in the attacks most recently attributed to them or in the attacks they allegedly made in Kentucky and Tennessee. Just because no one has been hurt doesn't mean they are not terrorists. Sources who claim to know the men or of the men assert that they are all in their 70's and in poor health. I believe these sources to be questionable at best. These men must be much younger, and are probably some dissent group of military Special Forces personnel. Stay tuned to CNN for further developments in this case.*

"Wee doggie," Ron said, "We're Special Forces Gar-Bear."

"We're special, that's for sure," Gary agreed.

"\$50 million," Clarence said, "If it gets to \$75 million, I'm going to turn us in myself."

"We'll let Ryan do it this time," Gary suggested, "That will get him back in good with the Army. In the meantime, we need to get us some portable welders."

"Won't they just blast their way out?" Clarence asked.

"Would you want to be inside a bomb shelter and have a bomb go off while you were sealed inside?" Gary asked. "The problem will be to keep them in there long enough for them to die off. There will probably be all kinds of government folks trying to rescue them."

"Well, we do have lots of Claymores and antitank mines and stuff," Clarence observed. "We can't stop them, but we can sure show them down. How are you going to get everyone into Mt. Weather in the first place Gary?"

"We're going to have to create a big enough diversion that they panic and run for cover, my friend," Gary said. "If either of you have any ideas about that, let me know."

### Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 8 – Summer Sortie

Ninety days passed before Costello rescinded martial law. Or, as some suggested, Marshal Law, and was that one “L” or two? Didn’t matter it was gone. Even having the better part of 90 days to think about it, the three old geezers weren’t exactly sure what they could do to throw the government into a sufficient panic to cause them to all rush to Mt. Weather. They had several good portable welders so if they could get the people inside, they could keep them there for a while. Whatever they were going to do, it was going to need to be on a large enough scale to send the President and Congress running. As anticipated, Costello had fired the Secretary of Homeland Security and selected the former chief of the ATF to take his place. This new guy was no slouch and they might not have the several months they’d planned on for him to organize the DHS.

They could have staged an attack during the State of the Union Speech, but it had been delivered. Article II, Section 3, Clause 1 of the Constitution provided:

“He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in Case of Disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to such Time as he shall think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States.”

“...he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them...”

So, all they needed was to give him a reason to convene an extraordinary session to address the Congress. Well, they could kill 2 birds with one stone if they attacked Mt. Weather. That ought to throw him into a panic and force him to address Congress to improve security or something, especially if they seriously damaged the aboveground facilities. Costello would rush to Congress begging for an emergency appropriation to make the repairs, or, so they hoped. Then they could turn right around and attack the joint session of Congress.

This wouldn’t have to be a major attack, just enough to panic everyone. Then, hopefully, fearing the worst, the Prez and Congress would all go rushing off to Mt. Weather and batten down the hatches. Of course, there would probably be heightened security around the place, but if they booby-trapped the grounds during the first attack, maybe the security forces could be herded; or maybe not. But, it was the best that they could come up with 90 days of brainstorming.

“I’m sure glad that butthead pulled the travel restrictions when he canceled martial law,” Ron said.

They had the modified lists but found that three 5-ton trucks simply wouldn’t hold it all. Gary found a used Petercar (Peterbilt Tractor) and a 40’ container on a trailer in Blythe.

That was nice in a way; they could load up the more obvious problem items in the container, affix a seal and lie their way across the whole US without ever having to break the seal. Unless one of those weigh stations gave them a problem. They made sure the rig was under weight for any state they might cross and did all of the paperwork.

Damon was the trucker dude so he would pull the container. Damon had talked his way out of a lot of problems while he'd been on the road. He always played it tiny bit on the dumb side and was very respectful. And he always ran just 2mph under the posted speed. Not enough to attract attention, either way. And, he was the consummate radio talker, keeping the CB running most of the time BS'ing the other drivers and learning of trouble before it came his way. Things that they could explain away went on the 5-ton, like the dune buggy's and food and other supplies.

They made their way to the nation's capital and rented a storage locker to keep the things they would need for the joint session. Then, they drove 40 of the 46 miles towards Bluemont and looked around for a place to hole up that was out of the way. Understand, they had brought everyone but their three wives. They finally found a place to put up out of sight and proceeded to prepare all of their little surprises for the security forces who were sure to come in if they succeeded in getting the Prez and the Congress to go to ground. They could get within a reasonable hike from the place with the dune buggies and preposition the surprises. The Claymores didn't need to be any more than hauled, but the booby traps, generally consisting of a grenade or a ½ stick of C-4 required some attention.

Ray was a big help on this project and when they were ready, they moved in the last of their supplies and brought in the Tac-50s and Barrett's and some AT-4s. The AT-4 has an effective range of 300 meters, but the overall range of the missile is 2,100 meters. They also had the DPV's equipped with the Mk-19's, Ma-Deuces and M-240s. Leaving the vehicles in place, they got just as close as they safely could and began to plant the typical assortment of tripwire devices, including grenades, taped to trees with a tripwire through the ring of the cotter pin, Claymores with tripwires, C-4 strapped to trees with a tripwire initiated detonator, etc. Man purely had to be careful where he walked by the time they were done. They even booby trapped the Claymores with a grenade underneath and pulled the pin after the Claymore was secure. It would take engineers a long time to undo what they'd done. Certainly longer than the 5 days they spent planting the stuff.

It wasn't going to take but a few of them to make the attack. The cousins could fire off a couple or three volleys of the AT-4s and they'd open up with the Mk-19's. Gar-Bear was counting on the mixture of weapons used in the attack and the very nature of the site to be a dead giveaway. He wanted the government to think the three of them were behind the attack. That would surely PO Costello and get him to go to Congress to raise the reward. And, if they could do enough damage, they could hope that he'd make that critical personal appearance before the joint houses to rip them a new one and get the hundreds of millions it would take to fix the place back up. I mean really, the President must surely have a list of all the equipment the Army had given them. When they were

ready to attack, they got motels in the Leesburg area.

“What we gonna do if this don’t work?” Clarence asked.

“I been thinking about that my friend,” Gary replied, gentler than usual, “There’s always that possibility. I figured maybe I’d just send the SOB a wire and say, *Catch us if you can*. If he’s a man, he’d have to take the challenge.”

“He might just think the message was intended for Teddy Kennedy and ignore it,” Ron laughed. “We gonna use the AT-4s on the Capitol Building?”

“We’ll have to, we won’t be able to get close enough,” Gary said. “Now, if we have everything in place I think that that we would be well served to stop and reflect on everything we done. This is probably our most significant operation ever. Once we start the ball rolling, there is no stopping. So, let’s take that time and review every single thing we done. And remember, we’re going to be up against professionals every step of the way. If we need to fix anything or change anything, now is the time.”

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“Hey guys,” Ray greeted them, “I have a couple of issues we should discuss.”

“Let’s hear it Ray,” Ron said.

“First, almost all of the things we set up as obstacles were tripwire devices,” Ray pointed out. “I don’t like that one bit. We should have a better variety of obstacles. Second, and fourth come to think of it, we’re going to hit this place twice, but we really don’t have a good alternative way out if they block the road in both directions. We might be okay the first time, but the second time with all of those dignitaries inside Mt. Weather, I’m sure the government will flood the area with troops. Third, this rocket attack on the Capitol Building is very risky. There are going to be security people all over the place.”

“I guess we need to go to plan B,” Gary said.

“We have a plan B?” Ron asked.

“No, we do not, but it appears that plan A has some serious problems,” Gary admitted.

“We can’t wait very long either,” Ray pointed out, “Or animals will start tripping those devices and flat give us away.”

“How hard would it be to take everything back out?” Gary asked.

“Hell man, two weeks minimum, why?” Ray asked.

“You had better get started,” Gary suggested, “This plan is going back on the drawing

boards. It's never going to work the way it is and I'm not getting our people killed because I'm too proud to recognize the flaws in this plan."

"Ok, we'll start pulling the stuff," Ray agreed. "At least what we did put in isn't that hard to remove, just time consuming."

"We need to rent a large house or even a lodge," Clarence suggested. "We can't stay in motels for too long, that will attract too much attention."

"If you have to, just buy one in the name of the corporation," Gary suggested. "No wait, I have a better idea. Ron, you and Clarence go buy an off the shelf corporation and set up a bank account. We can transfer in money as needed using the Bahamas cutout. And guys, use a small town lawyer and a branch of a large bank."

Gary had Derek get him all of the newspapers he could find and they set about looking for a property they could buy. He found a hunting lodge for sale and asked Derek to check it out with the realtor. Tell the realtor it was a corporate retreat or something similar, Gary suggested. It took Ron and Clarence a couple of attorney's before they found the right guy. They bought the corporate shell and came lugging back a pile of paperwork. The attorney would file all of the necessary papers, they explained.

"What did you do for a mailing address?" Gary asked.

"We got a P.O. Box at one of those private mail places," Ron explained.

"What's the name of our corporation?" Gary asked.

"The Government Improvement Group," Clarence replied, "It sort of seemed appropriate."

"I've got Derek out looking at I lodge I found in the classified," Gary explained. "Ron, why don't you call Wells Fargo and have them transfer \$5 million into the new account through the cutout?"

"Already done partner," Ron said, "But I suppose I got a mite heavy handed, I transferred \$7.5 million. We just need to get your signature, on this card and we are good to go in that department."

"Which alias?" Gary asked.

"John Coffee Hays," Ron said.

"And the checks?" Gary asked.

"Special order," Clarence said, "We can pick them up the day after tomorrow."

“Don’t you just love America?” Gary said, “If you have a fat checkbook and a good handshake, you can do anything.”

“Just remember to take the 5th,” Clarence grinned.

“Hey Derek, that didn’t take long, what did you find out?” Gary said greeting his returning son.

“Big Lodge on 10 acres Dad,” Derek reported. “Limited access. Price is pretty steep.”

“How steep?” Ron asked.

“\$2.5 million, steep,” Derek said.

“Does it meet our needs?” Gary asked.

“Oh yeah, it’s perfect,” Derek said, “But we shouldn’t pay that much.”

“Call the realtor back and tell him or her we’ll take it for the asking price,” Ron said.

“Cash transaction, but we want clear title within a week. Tell him the officers need to get away from town most urgently.”

“You have a corporation already?” Derek responded, surprised.

“Yep, Clarence said, “The name is the Government Improvement Group. And, we will have checks in 2 days and the money is already being transferred to our new bank account.”

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The Lodge really was the ideal location. Not so far away it would interfere with their plans and it would give them time to relax and rethink the whole project. It had a main lodge with 12 guest rooms, a dining room, kitchen and recreation room. There was a large barn that could serve as their storage facility. It was fairly remote with a single road entering the property. And, it was heavily wooded so they were pretty cut off from the rest of the world.

They suggested that Ray raid a couple of armories and get whatever he needed. He’d better do it all in one night, too because once he raided one, they tighten up security on all of them for a while. Ray said Ryan and he and the cousins would handle it. Ray had some definite items in mind to acquire. He wanted more of the MK3A2 grenades and a large supply of the M-14 anti-personnel mines. These mines were not designed to kill, but to incapacitate. All they would have to do was remove the metal washer from the bottom of the mine that the Army added to make the mines easy to locate. Using concussive grenades and non-lethal mines would accomplish their task just as well as using their more lethal cousins.

The lodge, located in West Virginia, could be accessed cross-country from Mt. Weather. They were going to need several ATV's to enable their escape, however. That's what checkbooks are for, right? They selected the Max IV, 4-passenger vehicle and bought a dozen. To make sure the vehicles would suit their purpose, the folks made several trips from the lodge to within a mile of Mt. Weather. If they didn't dwell at Mt. Weather for too long, the plan was becoming very workable. They would have to hit hard and fast and get out just as fast, especially the second time. At least they thought they had identified all of the 'escape' tunnels and it would be a 'simple' matter to plant explosive charges to seal them. Ray suggested a quick strike on the Capitol Building using a single AT-4. They weren't looking to damage the building seriously, just create fear and panic.

### **Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 9 – Simple is Good**

01Aug12...

"Are we ready Ray?" Gary asked.

"I guess so Guys," Ray replied, "We did real well at the armories and we have mines, grenades and the Claymores. We can use the non-lethal stuff close in and the Claymores as a last ditch backup measure. I mounted those portable welders on the second group of ATV's you got for me with the truck bodies. I think that the one thing that is helping us more than anything else is that terrorist strike those Muslim's did in Paris. Right now, tensions are high. So, I suggest that we get started planting the explosives and prepare to assault Mt. Weather for the first time."

"They are likely to search the countryside looking for us, what preparations have we got in place so they won't find us?" Clarence asked.

"We've been working in that barn Clarence," Ray said. "The little basement isn't very big, but will hold ½ of us for as long as we need to stay there. The rest of the folks can just hang out at the lodge. It probably wouldn't look right if the 'lodge staff' weren't around."

"Basement?" Ron reacted, "Gar-Bear is big on digging holes."

"I heard," Ray admitted, "That's where I got the idea."

"Derek has a big mouth," Gary said.

"Like father like son?" Ray chuckled.

They started the same day, planting large explosive charges at all of the escape tunnels. These were connected to radio controlled detonators. Then, they got as close to Mt. Weather as possible, perhaps closer than the first time. They worked their way out-



wards, planting the mines and setting up the trip wired concussive grenades. They worked steadily, but it took them a full 8 days to plant everything. They had done really, really well at the 2 armories. The very last layer, all around the facility, was a ring of Claymores. It seemed wasteful to plant them in direction they wouldn't be going, but if they just planted them in their direction of travel, they might just as well put up a sign. On the 9th day they rested. And, made a quick trip to Washington to clean out that storage locker.

10Aug12...the Lodge...

"So, is today the big day?" Clarence asked.

"That's right Clarence," Ray said. "Well take those DPV's and attack from just behind that line of Claymores. Those AT-4s and 40mm grenades should blow the crap out of the buildings. Any guards that put up any resistance will find out just how accurate those Ma-Deuces are. When we've done what damage we can, we'll pull back. Jim, Harry and Sam are leaving for Washington the same time as we head for Mt. Weather. They'll hit the Capitol, assuming Costello calls for a joint session."

"Will they have any trouble getting out of Washington?" Gary asked.

"They should be well clear before the word gets out about the attack," Ray said, "But if not, they can get a motel room and go to ground."

"Ok, let's do it," Gary quietly announced.

o

The guys had bought a used, bulletproofed Suburban. It was probably a government surplus vehicle used by the Secret Service or something. Sam, Jim and Harry, dressed in business suits and armed with some of the fake Secret Service ID's and more especially the 10mm pistol and submachine guns, left for Washington with the single AT-4. Ray, Stacy and Ryan, the 4 cousins, Damon and Derek and Mary took 5 of the DPV's and headed to Mt. Weather. When they got into position, they gave the President back his AT-4s. Well the explosive part, anyway. The buildings began to explode and the guards began to return fire in their general direction. They opened up with the Mk-19's and Ma-Deuces, putting most of them down. Those M16's the guards carried were never intended for targets at such a great distance and none of the Freedom Riders even had to duck a bullet.

Finally, with klaxons wailing, the remaining guards disappeared, probably into the underground facility. They turned the vehicles and drove around the perimeter of their defense until they were at the trail leading back to the Lodge. The Freedom Riders had attacked the facility from a different direction than the direction to the Lodge, the feds didn't really need to know where they came from, now did they? Phase one of the 3-phase operation was finally complete. Now they would just have to wait and see if Cos-

tello took the bait.

Washington DC...

“What do you mean they’re attacking Mt. Weather?” Costello asked. “Who is attacking Mt. Weather? How many are there of them? Where did they come from?”

“Mr. President, we have no idea who or how many,” the Secret Service agent said, “Come on Sir, we need to get to the Situation Room.”

Sometime later, the new Secretary for DHS approached the President.

“Mr. President, whoever it was cleared the area before we could get helicopters into play. Consequently we have no idea how many it was or where they came from. However, we suspect it may be those three old guys from California or wherever they live now or, a group of Muslim terrorists. This facility is the key to our national defense and the damage is extensive. We need to start rebuilding immediately. It might not be a bad idea to increase the reward on those men, either, in case it was them.”

“I’ll call over to the Hill and ask them to start an emergency appropriation bill today,” Costello said. “How much are you going to need?”

“Conservatively \$750 million, \$1 billion tops,” the Secretary replied. “Mr. President, you ought to address Congress directly and make the public aware of what a menace these guys are. It’s an election year, you know, and it could have been Muslim terrorists.”

“Ok, I set it up and notify the media,” Costello said. “Are you still happy I gave you the job?”

“All those commissions and the information flow isn’t one bit better,” the Secretary observed. “I suppose it beats enforcing laws that punish people for their bad habits and liking to hunt.”

o

Sam, Jim and Harry blended right in with the scene in Washington. A lot of people gave them that ‘knowing look’ and they just remained deadpan, like they assumed real SS agents did. On the way into Washington, they’d stolen a set of government plates so the Suburban didn’t attract any attention. They were just 3 SS agents on a coffee break, at one restaurant after another. They watched as the security slowly began to tighten in the nation’s capital. Then a TV announcer broke in with an announcement that the President was going to address Congress and the nation at 9pm eastern. They assumed that phase 1 worked as planned. Maybe they ought to go to the Capitol Building and get some lunch. They were supposed to have some really good soup in the cafeteria. And, they could maybe get lucky and pick the exact spot to hit the building with that AT-4. Not that it mattered, but it would be more impressive if they actually hit the House instead of

the Senate or the Rotunda. They launched their missile at 9:15pm EST and head back to the Lodge.

House Chamber...9pm...

*...I give you the President of the United States.*

*Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, Vice President Capuano, members of Congress, distinguished guests, fellow citizens. I come to you tonight on a matter of the gravest urgency. This morning rockets, grenades and machine gun fire were used to attack our FEMA facility and personnel at Mt. Weather. Some have suggested that this was the work of Muslim terrorists. However, I would point out that these are exactly the type of weapons that the late President supplied to those homegrown terrorists, Gary Olsen, Ronald Green and Clarence Rawlings.*

*The damage was extensive and I appear before Congress tonight to request an emergency appropriation of \$1.25 billion to make the initial repairs. We have no idea how much the final cost will be, it could perhaps be as much as \$3 billion.*

*Secondly, I request that Congress appropriate a larger reward for these terrorists. I believe that a reward of \$100 million for their arrest, alive, would be ample. These men are nothing but...*

The explosion of the AT-4 rocket hitting the building paused the President's speech in mid-sentence. The SS agents rushed to protect their charge. The senior agent said he'd been afraid of something like this and had Marine One standing by. The President instructed him to see that Congress got to Mt. Weather and they'd just button up the facility and let the Army and FBI track these SOB's down. They hurried to board Marine One.

"That went well," Ron laughed. "The SOB near jumped out of his skin. The guys should be back in an hour if everything goes according to plan."

"I agree," Gary said. "It didn't look like that chopper was headed back to the White House."

"\$100 million," Clarence murmured, "Man, I'm rich."

"I heard that Clarence," Ron said. "You're not rich, you're just expensive."

"We'll attack the place tomorrow," Ray said. "Providing they don't put too many security types in."

In fact, there were a lot of security people, but they were almost entirely underground. Locked down as the facility was, it was nearly impenetrable. No doubt there were security forces on call in the event of an attack on the facility, probably the Army with Apache

gunships and a lot of soldiers. However, at the facility itself, the guard force was only about doubled.

The Freedom Riders approached cautiously in their ATV's and skirted their own booby traps and mines. When they were close enough, they opened fire with the suppressed rifles. It didn't appear that any of the guards had an opportunity to raise an alarm; they had gone down pretty fast. They brought the 4 ATV trucks up and began to weld. They worked quickly, efficiently and quietly. When the entrances were sealed, they retreated. Finally, Ray armed the radio detonator and blew the charges in the escape tunnels and took out the communications. The rats were trapped.

o

"Sir, I've lost communications with Mt. Weather," the soldier said.

"What do you mean, you lost communications?" the Colonel asked.

"That's just it Sir, I don't know, the lines suddenly went dead," the soldier replied.

"Get those choppers airborne," the Colonel said, "You don't suppose they attacked the place again do you?"

"This is the Area Commander's office," the soldier spoke into the phone, "We lost contact with Mt. Weather. The Colonel said for you to get airborne."

The choppers were at Mt. Weather in a matter of minutes. They could see bodies on the ground, but no one moving. They radioed the information to the Commander and began a search pattern around the facility, in a circular fashion, slowly expanding the circle. Meanwhile, the 16 ATV's were already almost back to West Virginia.

Electron beam welding was invented perhaps in the 1950's. The welding process took place in a vacuum chamber, but it had many advantages, including the ability to make deep welds. In the period from 2004 to 2011, many advances had been made in the equipment. They now even produced a portable EBW that had its own vacuum chamber fitted to the welding head. The device permitted repairs to be made to existing structures.

The equipment was reasonably compact; in fact the largest part of the unit was the 100kw portable generator that powered the welder. Using the welder, one could weld two metal plates together to a depth of nearly a foot. You could even weld many dissimilar metals. Our boys believed in nothing but the best. They had fused the door shut to a depth of 12". It would take a whole lot of cutting to get them open again. The welds didn't go all around the door, but that didn't really matter. You do realize, don't you, that those escape tunnels were also the air intakes for the shelter?

"You should have put in radar Gar-Bear," Ron said, "Then we'd know when the govern-

ment was going to show up.”

“And explain it away as a squirrel tracking device for our hunters?” Gary smiled. “We have no airport so we don’t need any radar. Anyway, there’s really no place for anything to land, even a helicopter.”

“So, are we going to sell this place or what?” Clarence asked.

“It makes more sense to keep it, doesn’t it?” Gary suggested. “Then we’ll have a base of operations on both coasts.”

“It’s going to be a week before they get those welds cut,” Ray said, “But at least they have food, water and air.”

### **Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 10 – Take Small Shallow Breaths**

“Mr. President, we have a problem,” the Secretary of DHS said.

“What now?” Costello asked.

“The guards can’t seem to get out of the doors,” the Secretary reported. “It’s almost as if they’re welded shut.”

“But there are escape tunnels, right?” Costello asked. “Have them go out one of those and see what’s blocking the door.”

“We already tried Mr. President,” the Secretary explained. “Those explosions we heard earlier that we couldn’t explain? Those were the escape tunnels being blown up.”

“All of them?” Costello asked.

“Yes Sir,” the Secretary replied.

“Well, we will just wait for the Army to unblock the doors, no problem,” Costello said. “We have food, water and air. What’s the problem?”

“Mr. President, the escape tunnels were also the air intakes, if they don’t hurry, we’re going to run out of air,” the Secretary grimaced.

“How long do we have?” Costello asked, concerned.

“72 hours, Mr. President.”

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Where is William Bendix when you need him? [He died in 1964. Following a stomach ailment, Bendix died at 58 from malnutrition and subsequent pneumonia. His wife of 37 years, Theresa Stefanotti, and their two daughters survived him. I didn’t know that.] This was most certainly one of those revolting developments.

“So how long will it take to cut open those doors?” the Colonel asked.

“Hard to say Colonel,” the Sergeant said, “They’re pretty thick and they’re welded in several places. It depends upon how deep those welds are. We can’t get the doors open until we can cut out all of those welds. Whoever did this welded each door in several places, so they must have had several welders.”

“Put everyone on one door, Sergeant. We have to get those people out of there,” the Colonel ordered.

“Yes Sir,” the Sergeant acknowledged.

It became a race against time, and the military welders had no idea how deep the weld extended. One of the problems, of course was the tungsten alloy door, which seemed to absorb the heat. While the welders tried to get through the door, the Colonel sent troops out to scout the area. It didn't take very long for some of them to run into the tripwires and mines. The Colonel had no choice but to send for engineers to locate and defuse the weapons. The M-14 mine has no disarming safety, by the way.

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“Choppers,” Ray yelled.

Everyone sat tight. The coppers had nowhere to land and if they were attack helicopters, surely they wouldn't fire on an unknown target. When the choppers failed to see anyone the pilots radioed in the lodge's location and moved on.

“It's time for all of us non-civilian types to hit that basement,” Ray suggested. “The troops can't be far behind.”

“There you go Gar-Bear,” Ron said, “Your favorite place. What is it with you and basements?”

“That, my friend is a long story,” Gary said quietly, “And I won't tell you sometime.”

Jim, Sam and Harry and their wives plus Jennifer and the other women stayed at the Lodge. Everyone else made for the basement. The gag this time was that it was the Executives' wives on an outing to get away from their husbands. Jim and Sammy, Sam and Mary and Harry and Janet were the 'corporate employees' in charge of maintaining the Lodge and preparing meals, etc. About 40 minutes after the choppers left, 2 Hummers and a truckload of troops pulled in. Everyone had to produce their ID's (fake) and the troops thoroughly searched the grounds. The Lieutenant in charge of the detail asked a lot of questions, but seemed satisfied with the answers, at least for the moment. He wrote down a lot of the information before he left.

“You can come out now,” Jim said.

“What did they want to know?” Gary asked.

“Just the usual stuff,” Jim said, “They made us show our ID's and questioned the ladies. That Lieutenant wrote down a lot of information, though. Don't know what to make of that.”

“Give out any of the phony business cards?” Gary continued.

“Well, yeah, weren't we supposed to?” Jim asked.

“Ronald, did you get the gig.com website set up?” Gary asked.

“Yeah, it has an ‘Under Construction’ sign, just like you wanted. And I used the P.O. Box and the cell phone number, just like you told me,” Ron confirmed.

“We’re ok Jim, the cell phone is set up with a mailbox for the corporation and they won’t get anything from the P.O. Box.” Gary said, “The website just shows that information anyway.”

“Isn’t technology marvelous Jim?” Ron asked. “Gary even made up some letterhead on the inkjet. The corporation is mostly form with very little substance. The only thing the corporation will show up owning is this Lodge. And they’ve already checked it out.”

“I wouldn’t be too quick to honk my horn if I were you,” Ray said. “Once they get those people out of that shelter, all hell is going to break loose.”

o

“How long has it been?” Costello asked.

“Altogether or since the last time you asked Mr. President?” the Secretary asked.

“Since those explosions and the last time the door was open,” Costello said.

“48 hours since the explosions and 49 hours since the door was opened Mr. President,” the Secretary said, “Try taking small shallow breaths.”

“How much longer Sergeant?” the Colonel asked.

“Hard to say Sir. We cut through two of the welds so far. Those guys must have used a portable electron beam welder, the welds are about a foot deep,” the Sergeant replied.

“Can’t we drill a hole in that metal?” the Colonel asked.

“No Sir, we tried a diamond drill, but it only cut an inch in an hour,” the Sergeant said. “We gave up. But if you want, we can try again Colonel. The thing is Sir; the door will be open by the time we drill a hole all the way through. The door is 30” thick.”

“All right Sergeant, keep me informed,” the Colonel said.

“Yes Sir,” the Sergeant replied.

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*This word is just in, the announcer said. Army officials finally admitted that the Presi-*



*dent, Vice President, the Cabinet and the Democratic members of Congress are trapped in the Mt. Weather Facility in Bluemont, Virginia. Apparently the Republican members of Congress refused to go. The Colonel in charge of opening the door to the facility tells CNN that the door was welded shut using a portable electron beam welder. However, they have removed over half of the welds and expect to be able to release the President and the others in less than 48 hours. The shelter has an unlimited water supply, food for 200 people for 30 days and air supplied through a series of air vents that also serve as emergency exits. According to...*

“Jeez,” Ron blurted out, “Are those the escape tunnels we blew shut?”

“Must be,” Ray said, “They were the only things that showed up on the GPR.”

“I wonder how much air that place holds?” Clarence asked.

“Well, if it’s not enough guys, we may be in deep do-do,” Gary said.

“There ya go Gar-Bear, ya finally went and did it, didn’t you? You trapped 80% of Congress and the whole Executive branch of the government in a hole in the ground without air. Let’s see, the Secretary said it had been 48 hours and that they only had 72 hours of air. That must mean that they have about 24 hours left, right? And the Sergeant had only removed ½ of the welds in 48 hours, right? Talk about being a day late! But wait, what about all those bottles of emergency oxygen? Every shelter, except yours, has emergency bottles of oxygen doesn’t it? Or, did the Secretary count those bottles in when he came up with 72 hours? Kind of make you wonder, doesn’t it?”

“I’ve got to go lay down,” Gary said, “I’m getting another headache.”

“Let me check you over,” Jennifer suggested.

“Ok, but can I have a shot of Demerol then?” Gary asked.

“We don’t use Demerol anymore Gary, it kills people,” Jennifer replied taking his pulse.

“Good, give me 2 and bury me in the morning,” Gary said.

“When did you get this headache?” Jennifer asked.

“About 2 minutes ago when I realized that we may have killed off most of the government,” Gary replied.

“Hell partner, you’ll be a hero to all those survivalist buddies of yours,” Ron laughed.

“Yeah and the reward will be bigger,” Clarence said.

“I can’t find anything wrong Gary,” Jennifer said, “It must be stress.”

“Oh good, I can take a handful of Xanax and sleep it off,” Gary said.

“The maximum dose for someone like you would be 1 mg,” Jennifer said.

“Ok Doc,” Gary smiled, “Whatever you say.” He took 3 of the 0.5mg tablets and went to bed.

They broke out the CO2 scrubbers in the shelter and that helped a little. Then, at the 70-hour mark, they began to bleed oxygen into the air. It was going to be close. The most optimistic guess was that they had about 25 hours worth of oxygen. Would the residual oxygen in the air be enough to last when the bottles ran out? You already know the answer, I made it plain as day. Think about it.

“How is it going Sergeant?” the Colonel asked.

“We have 3 cut off Sir and we’re working as fast as we can on that last weld,” the Sergeant replied.

“It’s important Sergeant, but don’t rush it,” the Colonel said. “We wouldn’t want anyone to get hurt this close to having the door open.”

“Yes Sir,” the Sergeant acknowledged. “Everybody take 10.”

“You know Sergeant, the Engineers are having a terrible time,” the Colonel said.

“Sir?” the Sergeant replied.

“Yes. They are finding plenty of booby traps, but so far they are all non-lethal devices,” the Colonel explained. “They pulled the washers off those M-14 mines, so have to go very slowly. But it’s almost like whoever did this didn’t want to hurt anyone. Besides, what good did it do for them to weld those doors shut? They must have known we could cut off the welds.”

“I don’t know Colonel, questions like that are above my pay grade Sir,” the Sergeant replied.

### **Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 11 – How much Oxygen?**

The House of Representatives had 435 seats, 80% filled by Democrats. The Republicans in the fall of 2012 held 87 seats and they had refused to go to Mt. Weather. The Senate had 100 seats, 79% filled by Democrats, thus there were also 21 Republican Senators who had refused to go. The Secretary, being new on the job, asked one of his staff how much air there was and was told there was enough for 72 hours, not counting the oxygen. This assumed that all the members of Congress were present, but the staff member didn't mention that.

Therefore, there was an excess amount of breathable air equal to 108 people for 72 hours; or 7,776 man-hours of extra air. Plus 25 hours of oxygen for 108 people bringing the grand total to 10,476 extra man-hours of oxygen-laden air. But you all caught that, right? Gary did; but Gary didn't know how many people were in Mt. Weather so he had no idea about how long that extra breathable air would last the people inside; and he didn't know about the 72 hours or the 25 hours so he couldn't do the math. Rather than give his friends false hope, he kept his mouth shut. Gary's sense of timing always left a little to be desired.

"How are you doing Sergeant?" the Colonel asked.

"Sir, it looks like just a few more hours," the Sergeant replied. "It's has taken us just about 24 hours per weld, Sir. We have about 20" to go on the last one. Everything considered, Colonel, this is one thing I never expected that would happen. Those doors were to protect the people, not to imprison them. And we got lucky Sir, we just received some new equipment last week that cuts a little faster than the older equipment."

"So, it looks like the one door will take you about 96 hours?" the Colonel summarized.

"Actually 95 sir," the Sergeant said, "But essentially 4 days, Yes Sir."

"I checked with some of the Engineers and they say it's pretty difficult to do electron beam welding," the Colonel said.

"Yes Sir," The Sergeant agreed, "It essentially has to be done in a vacuum. And, it takes a lot of power Sir. These guys must have had several of those new portable rigs. They are large and expensive. They had to have had small trucks or something like that to move them."

"You know Sergeant, President Costello was going to recommend that Congress up the rewards on those guys Olsen, Green and Rawlings," the Colonel observed. "They seem to have no end of money at their disposal. One thing that the President didn't say in his speech was that they've gone out of their way to avoid killing. And he was right about that equipment, I issued some of it to them myself when I was assigned to Flagstaff. Those boys have tanks, Paladin self-propelled armor, missiles of several types, explosives, and even a couple of the M1117's. Hell, I wouldn't be surprised if they had some-

one turn them in and collected the reward on themselves. And CNN was suggesting they were Special Forces. Don't you believe it Sergeant; they're just three old survivalists who happen to support and defend the same Constitution that we do."

"The Colonel sounds as if he admires the men," the Sergeant said.

"In a way Sergeant, I do," the Colonel chuckled. "But if we can find them, that won't stop me from arresting them.

"Yes Sir," the Sergeant acknowledged.

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"I wouldn't be in this mess if you were doing your job," the President told the Secretary.

"I didn't attack the Mountain and I surely didn't attack the House, Mr. President," the Secretary objected.

"But you should have been better prepared at DHS," Costello countered.

"The Department was prepared Mr. President," the Secretary protested. "I wasn't the idiot who designed this place and was too cheap to put in separate air intakes and escape tunnels. My department isn't responsible to the failure of the various intelligence agencies to communicate possible threats between agencies. If we get out of this, I'm going to retire and hunt whoever did this down. But, it won't be to turn them in; it will be to join them. They're obviously smart, resourceful and can put a plan together."

"And," he thought, "They didn't kill a single one of my ATF agents."

"Mr. Secretary, have your resignation on my desk within the hour," Costello screamed.

"Here you go, you don't have to wait an hour," the Secretary said handing the President an envelope.

o

"We're through Sir," the Sergeant said, "Just as soon as we get a tank and some log chains we'll have the door open."

"Good work Sergeant, there will be a promotion in this," the Colonel said.

"Great," the Sergeant said, "I always wanted to be an E-10."

They attached the chains and started the Abrams moving. The door groaned almost as if it didn't want to give up the fight and slowly began to open. The foul air rushed out as the fresh air of the Virginia countryside replaced it. CNN, FOX, ABC, CBS and NBC car-

ried the event live. Each commentator had his or her version of the event. Slowly, people began to emerge into the light from the cavernous shelter. President Costello was busy shaving and then was going to get into a clean shirt. He couldn't meet the press looking like he did. The new, er former, Secretary of DHS declined comment and climbed into a vehicle to be transported from the scene.

"Colonel, to show you how grateful we are, I'm going to put your name up before Congress for General," Costello said. "And Sergeant, a promotion is in order for you, too. You'll make a fine Lieutenant."

"Thank you Sir," they both replied.

After the President and his entourage left, the Colonel leaned over to the Sergeant and said, "I'll take his promotion Sergeant, and then I'll retire."

"I didn't spend 30 years in this man's Army just to become a Lieutenant, Colonel," the Sergeant replied, "I'm putting in my papers when we get back to the fort."

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The Lodge...just after the rescue...

"All's well that ends well," Gary said.

"I should have known that a government engineer designed that place," Ray lamented. "Who would have thought that they'd use the air intakes as escape tunnels?"

"Well, at least we don't have several hundred deaths to explain to the good Lord, when we get to the Pearly Gates," Clarence observed.

"You know guys, I was saying that we ought to keep this place," Gary added. "How's about Jim, Sam and Harry stay on and we run this as the Mt. Weather Resort? They can bring their kids here and we'll have one legitimate business as a cover for any future operations."

"Works for me," Ron said.

"I agree," Clarence chimed in.

In the election of November of 2012, the voters showed that they had had enough. The Republicans hadn't run to Mt. Weather to hide and the Republican candidate, although trailing in the polls scored a landslide win, getting 62% of the vote. The Republicans also gained a small majority in both houses of Congress. The lame duck President and Congress voted \$2 billion for repairs of Mt. Weather, and almost in an afterthought, raised the reward on the dynamic trio to \$250 million.

As planned, Ryan turned the men in and collected his \$250 million reward. It turned out that the men were hiding out in the Flagstaff area all of the time. Yeah, for all of about 5 minutes. The Sheriff put on extra security at the jail; he wasn't about to lose the prisoners this time. The convoy taking the prisoners to the airport for transportation back to Washington was ambushed by a small group of heavily armed men and women. They had M-1117's and some of those DPV's. The Sheriff's people couldn't resist all of those Mk-19's and Ma-Deuces and rather than risk a large loss of life, surrendered their prisoners. Ryan deposited the check in his Wells Fargo account, transferred the money to the Bahamas and left it sit, drawing interest until the three old geezers decided what to do with their new found fortune.

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The Underground City...

"Now, Clarence," Ron kidded, "Now you can say it."

"I'm rich," Clarence yelled. "But what are we going to do with \$275 million guys?"

"We could buy Mexico," Ron suggested, "All of the Mexicans are in the US."

"How about a housing development," Gary suggested. "We own enough land and this area here would be ideal. Besides, we have about the best bomb shelter in the world. We could make everything 100% energy independent. You know, electrical panels on the roofs, solar water heaters, a wind farm, maybe a solar array and even electric cars. We could be totally free of hydrocarbons."

"I never met a hydrocarbon I didn't like," Ron said. "We could get into producing that biodiesel stuff and the like. That way we could keep our Dodge Ram's."

"What would you call this housing development?" Clarence asked.

"How about Freedom Village?" Gary suggested. "And rather than hiding all of those tanks and arty and stuff, we'll put the tanks, the M-1117's, the Paladins and stuff on display. We can put up a sign that says they are mockups and another sign that says that due to insurance reasons, people can't look inside. Hide it all in plain sight."

"I don't know Gar-Bear," Ron said, "We're pretty old to be doing this stuff. You're going to be 70 in March and you're the youngest one of the three of us."

"Didn't figure on doing any of it ourselves guys," Gary said, "We'll hire Engineers to design everything and contractors to put it in."

"What kind of houses we gonna have," Clarence asked, "You going to build them slip form things you're always writing about?"

“No sir,” Gary said, “I figured we’d get a distributorship with a manufactured housing company and buy mobile homes at cost.”

“This all sounds very interesting,” Ray said, “I wish we’d be around to see it. But Stacy and I and Ryan and Jennifer are moving up to Jackson.”

“But why?” Gary asked, “This would be the ideal community. We could just invite survivalists to buy in and it would be our own private little army.”

“Well, I’ve always had a hankering to live in Jackson and Stacy is from there,” Ray explained. “Ryan wants to go wherever we go and Jennifer wants to be with Ryan, though I can’t imagine why.”

Ryan caught Ray’s wink and said, “Not that it hasn’t been fun, you understand, BUT, we’re getting a little tired of being one step ahead of the law. Anyway, Jen says that she’s going whether I come or not.”

“Ok, I guess,” Gary said, “When are you folks planning on leaving?”

“We don’t really have a lot of possessions,” Ray said, “The Corporation always owned everything so anytime, I guess.”

“How are you folks fixed for money?” Ron asked.

“We have most of the money you passed out the last time,” Ray said, “We’re good.”

“You’ll be taking your own guns and things, but help yourself to any of the government weapons we’ve collected,” Gary offered.

“We might take a few things,” Ray said, “Thanks for offering. But I think we’ll travel light. It will be just my old hound, Promise and us. We’ll let you know before we leave.”

After Ray left, Gary spoke up. “I sure hate to see them go guys, what say we give them part of that reward money just to make sure they have everything they need?”

“Sounds good to me,” Ron said.

“How much you planning to give them?” Clarence asked.

“I was thinking 10% of the reward Clarence,” Gary replied, “Is that okay with you?”

“Easy come, easy go,” Clarence laughed, “Sure Gary, get them a cashier’s check for \$25 million. Jennifer can build a clinic or something.”

“Look at it as an investment guys,” Gary said, “That whole Washington/Mt. Weather thing worked because of the Muslim unrest. You never know when we might need their

help again. Besides, Ray did good on that job.”



## Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 12 – Freedom Village

“I guess we’re ready to leave,” Ray announced.

“We have a little going away present for you partner,” Ron said. “Clarence, do you have that check?”

“Here you go Ray, Jennifer can build a clinic or something,” Clarence smiled handing Ray the cashier’s check.

“\$25 million?” Ray gasped, “Are you guys’ nuts?”

“If it wasn’t for you folks,” Gary said, “We wouldn’t have any of that money. It will let you get a good start up in Wyoming and if you invest it wisely, you’ll never have to worry about money again.”

“Good luck on your project guys,” Ray grinned, “We may come down and check it out one of these days.”

And with that, the four were gone, at least for now.

“So, with Sam, Jim and Harry and their wives back in West Virginia and Jennifer gone, what are we going to do for medical treatment around this place?” Ron asked.

“Let me show you these plans I’ve been working on Ron,” Gary said, “They should answer your question.”

The plans were for a community of triplewide mobile homes, each on a ½ acre lot. Gary had sketched in an area for the wind turbines, the solar array and a combined battery storage and generation plant. Gary apparently figured that if the lights went out, the wind didn’t blow for a while and the sun didn’t shine, they could switch to biodiesel fueled backup generators. The plans also showed a warehouse complex, no explanation was given, and a medical clinic. There was a ‘service’ station marked in next to the biodiesel plant and apparently Gary even planned to build some stores. Freedom Village would be a self-contained community and they would never need to go to town to shop.

“So what are you going to put in those warehouses?” Ron asked.

“I figured we’d store a one-year supply of everything the community needs, partner,” Gary said. “And we can grow and butcher our own livestock and produce our own milk and cheese.”

“Who are we going to get to move into this place?” Clarence asked.

“You know Clarence, I was thinking we just let military veterans move in,” Gary replied,

“What do you think of that?”

“They gonna have enough money to pay for a home?” Clarence wondered.

“They will if we finance them pal,” Gary suggested. “Look, we split the difference between the cost of a setup home and the MSRP including setup and everything. That way they get the home at a discount. Hell, we can call it a veteran’s discount. And, we can finance them at say 5%. You have to remember, we don’t really have any investment here; it is all reward money.”

“Gar-Bear 200 homes is probably about 3.4 people times 200 or 680 people,” Ron pointed out. “We don’t really have enough firepower for that many people. What with the AWB and everything, where are you going to get the weapons and equipment we’ll need? I distinctly remember you telling Ray that we would have our own private army.”

“Ron, Damon is a veteran, and he has one talent above all others,” Gary said, “We’ll steal what we need of course. And, if they think it’s us, they’ll probably authorize another reward and when it gets big enough, we’ll cash in on it.”

“Ryan had a point Gary,” Clarence said, “I’m getting a little tired of being on the run. What are we going to do when someone recognizes us?”

“Well Clarence, you just say, something like, ‘I get a lot of that; someone is always mistaking me for that guy,’ or, ‘you know, I admire the guy, I wish I was him’. Anyway you get the idea.”

“What do we do if that doesn’t work Gar-Bear?” Ron asked.

“Did I show you where I planned to put the Cemetery guys?” Gary asked.

o

Washington DC...

“What is this new Freedom Village community they’re building out near Blythe?” the President asked.

“President Santorum, I haven’t even heard of the place,” the aide replied, “Where did you learn of the community?”

“There was an article in Ecological Engineering,” Santorum replied, “It appears that the place is going to be totally energy independent. Look into it, will you?”

“Certainly, what do you want to know?” the aide replied.

“Find out whom is behind the project who is going to be living there and what the com-

munity is going to be like,” Santorum explained. “These people might be on to something. Despite what everyone in the US thinks, the Republican Party is not pro-oil and anti-environment. Who knows, maybe these people are on to something that the Party can support?”

“Yes sir,” the aide replied, “It will take a few days.”

“No hurry,” Santorum acknowledged.

◦

Freedom Village...

“There you go with those basements again,” Ron groaned. “Why do you want to put in basements in earthquake country?”

“Ron, a basement is almost free storage space,” Gary said. “You have to put in a foundation and a slab anyway and the only extra materials we’re using is a little concrete for walls and some ‘I’ beams. Pretty cheap per square foot when you consider how much storage you get.”

“Why are you having them weld the steel beams of the homes to the supporting beams?” Ron asked.

“Man those homes won’t go anywhere once they’re welded down,” Gary replied.

“I had an inquiry from someone in Washington about the development,” Ron mentioned casually.

“What did they want to know?” Gary asked.

“All about us, who we’re selling to and stuff like that,” Ron replied.

“And?” Gary asked.

“Sent them the sales brochure, the CC&R’s and an application to purchase a home,” Ron said. “That’s what we send everyone else who inquires.”

“Ok, good,” Gary said. “So far, we’ve been pretty lucky attracting retired servicemen, how many families do we have?”

“63 and every single one of them has a retired vet with 20 or more years of service,” Ron said.

“Good, did Clarence start up the shooting club?” Gary asked.

“Yeah. They all joined when they found out we provided free ammo,” Ron smiled.

“How is Damon doing on his little private project?” Gary asked.

“Gar-Bear, we have enough M16’s and ammo to fight WW III,” Ron said.

“We won WW III, Ron,” Gary reminded him, “You mean WW IV?”

“Call it whatever you want,” Ron said, “Did you see the news last night?”

“If those Israelis don’t stop killing Palestinians,” Gary commented, “There aren’t going to be any Palestinians for them to fight with.”

“That might be the general idea Gar-Bear,” Ron opined.

◦

Palmdale...

“All I’m saying Chris is that we can get a fortune for this house and buy ½ acre with a triplewide on it over dirt cheap in the new Freedom Village the guys are building,” Patti said. That ought to appeal to you.”

“I don’t know Patti,” Chris replied, “Gary has been on a survivalist kick for as long as I’ve known him. Besides, I’m not retired military or even a veteran.”

“Yeah, but one little call to Sharon and I can fix that,” Patti demurred. “As large as those lots are, you can build a garage and build race cars to your heart’s content.”

“Ok, call Sharon and see what she can do,” Chris gave in, “But we’re not putting this house on the market until we’re sure we can buy in over there.”

◦

Freedom Village...

“Sharon, Patti,” Patti said.

“Hi Patti, how are things in Palmdale?” Sharon asked.

“I want to sell the house and move to that new community you guys are building,” Patti explained, “But Chris says we can’t list the house until he has an iron clad guarantee that we can move in.”

“List the house, Patti,” Sharon said, “Gary knows who wears the pants in this family.”

The next morning...

"Anyway, Chris and Patti are moving in as soon as their house sells," Gary explained.

"Chris isn't a veteran," Ron protested.

"Tell that to Sharon, Ronald, she says that he fought with us so that makes him a veteran."

"Oh, the boss is in charge, huh?" Ron said. "I just hope Linda doesn't go inviting people to move in here."

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Washington...

"They sent me a sales brochure, application and their CC&R's, Mr. President," the aide reported. "I checked on the corporation. It's a Nevada Corporation that's closely held. I ran the names of the individuals through NCIC and didn't get a hit. I checked and the principals have passports, driver's licenses, and not a single violation either. They finance their own paper and only sell to retired military veterans. This is quite a display they have of mockup military hardware, too."

"No exceptions?" Santorum asked.

"Not that I know of, no," the aide replied.

"Ok thanks, Rob, this might be a place to keep an eye on," Santorum said. "What's this about a rash of armory break-ins?"

"The FBI is on it Mr. President," Rob replied, "Apparently someone is stealing military rifles, ammo and individual equipment. Since these are automatic weapons, the ATF is on it too. But whoever is doing it is pretty slick. So far the FBI hasn't come up with any forensic evidence leading to anyone. Essentially their investigation is stalled."

"Are we talking a large quantity here or what?" Santorum asked.

"Maybe enough for 2 or 3 companies of soldiers," Rob replied, "So it amounts to quite a bit, yes."

"Keep an eye on that situation too Rob," Santorum directed. "Has the Secretary of State shown up yet? We've got to get to the bottom of this Israeli situation before the Muslim's start blaming us."

"The Secretary is waiting, Mr. President," Rob said, "But the Muslims began blaming us for Israel in 1948, so don't be surprised at anything the Secretary tells you."

“Show her in will you?” Santorum directed.

“Madam Secretary, how are things down in Texas?” Santorum greeted her.

“They’re letting President Bush out of the hospital,” Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice replied. “He got a letter a while back. All it said was, “I changed my mind, and I won’t be back.”

“Hmm, I wonder what that was all about.” Santorum asked.

### Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 13 – But They’re Real

“Apparently, President Bush was shot at after he retired,” Condi said, “While it’s apparent that whoever did it intentionally missed, they left a note that said, ‘I’ll be back’ and President Bush became paranoid. But when he got the second note, he snapped right out of it.”

“That was about the time Kerry was killed, so the FBI and Secret Service were pretty busy,” she said, “Anyway they didn’t come up with anything.”

“What’s the situation in Israel?” Santorum asked.

“They go back and forth depending on which party is in power, but I think that they may have pushed too hard this time,” Condi replied.

“In what way?” Santorum asked.

“It’s so hard to get good Intel, but,” Condi said, “ Hamas and some of the other organizations are experiencing resurgence in membership and I heard a name recently that I hadn’t heard in a while.”

“What name?” Santorum asked.

“bin Laden,” Condi said, “Not Osama, but a son.”

“We haven’t heard that name in a while Condi,” Santorum agreed, “What is al Qaeda up to?”

“We have no idea, as usual,” she replied. “Like I said, it’s really hard to get good intelligence.”

o

Palmdale...

“For crying out loud Chris,” Patti said, “What do you mean it’s not enough? We only paid \$99 thousand for this place, I think \$540 thousand is more than enough.”

“But the house next door went for \$575 thousand,” Chris insisted.

“Yeah, but it’s a 2 story with 1,800 plus square feet. This house is a one story with only 1,254 square feet,” Patti said, “We’re selling, so you best start packing your crap!”

Chris supposed that he could finish the car when they got to eastern California. At least he had enough money out of the house to pay off the old house, pay cash for the new house, build a garage and fully equip it. He could probably get that million Gary had giv-

en him replenished back to the \$1 million and still have enough cash to race for a couple of seasons. Gary would probably insist that he join that shooting team Patti told him about, too. Well, if Gary insisted, he would, but he would rather be a wheelman than an infantryman.

Freedom Village...

“And I’m telling you that those aren’t mock ups,” the Sergeant insisted. “We used an Abrams to pull the door open on Mt. Weather last year and I know an Abrams when I see one.”

“I don’t believe I caught your name Sergeant,” Derek said.

“Sergeant Major William Jefferson, USA retired,” Bill replied, “What’s your name?”

“Derek Olsen,” Derek replied, “I was an Abrams commander in the Iowa National Guard.”

“Any relation to that Gary Olsen that the government can’t seem to keep their hands on?” Bill asked.

“He’s my father,” Derek said.

“So you’re the son of one of the guys who was responsible for that Mt. Weather business?” Bill replied, surprised.

“He was accused,” Derek said, “And arrested, but in this country, you are innocent until you are proven guilty.”

“But he was there, right?” Bill asked.

“Actually, my father never set foot on Mt. Weather, Bill,” Derek replied.

“The Colonel who was in charge of the rescue said that he really admired whoever was behind it,” Bill remarked. “He said that the engineers had one hell of a time removing some of the explosives those people planted because they used non-lethal devices. The M-14 mines were harder to remove than the M-16’s and they made it even harder by removing the washers the Army installed to make the mine easy to detect.”

“You don’t say,” Derek responded. “So what ever happened to this Colonel of yours?”

“He stayed in long enough to get the promotion to General the President promised and then retired,” Bill said. “The last I heard, he and that former Secretary of DHS got together as security consultants. You know that the Secretary resigned because of that deal don’t you?”



"I hadn't heard that, no," Derek admitted.

"Seems like he told the President that it wasn't his fault that everything got screwed up and the President asked for his resignation," Bill said. "The General told me that the Secretary thought whoever was behind that deal was smart and he sort of admired them because they didn't kill any of his ATF agents."

"That would mean that the Secretary assumed that whoever was behind Mt. Weather was involved in those attacks in Kentucky and Tennessee?" Derek asked.

"I never thought about it," Bill said, "But when you put it like that, yes, I'd guess so. Anyway to finish the story, apparently the Secretary told the President that if he could find the guys, he'd join them."

"And the General?" Derek asked, "What would he do?"

"When he was still a Colonel on active duty, he would have arrested them," Bill related, "But now that he's retired, I think he'd give them a pass."

"Well Bill that's all very interesting," Derek said "But what makes you so certain that those are real tanks?"

"Cause, that Ma-Deuce up on top is real, Derek," Bill laughed, "And you well know it."

"You don't think it's a demilled machine gun, huh?" Derek asked.

"Demilled machine guns would have the barrel welded shut and the firing pin removed, Derek, at the very minimum," Bill said, "All it would take to fire that weapon is a box of .50 cal ammo. By the way, where is your father?"

"I don't know," Derek replied, "I haven't seen him in a while (2 hours). So where do you stand with regard to my father and his alleged crimes?"

"Them three old men have big ones," Bill laughed, "I'd probably fight for them. The Colonel said they were the same as us, supporting and defending the Constitution. Why?"

"Just curious," Derek said.

o

Derek shared what he'd learned from the Sergeant Major with Clarence, Ron and his Dad. Gary suggested that Derek take an informal poll among the residents and find out what their attitudes were with respect to the three of them. Derek did just that. A couple of the vet's thought it was a shame that the FEMA guards had been killed at Mt. Weather, but even they agreed with the majority that if they ever had to go into combat, they

follow those three old men if they could ever find them. Derek talked with Bill again and asked the SM if he knew how to get in touch with the General. Bill whipped out one of the General's business cards and gave it to Derek who gave it to Gary who faxed it to Jim in West Virginia. Gary suggested the Jim check the General and his partner out and see how they felt about the Freedom Riders. If they really were pro FR, maybe they would like to spend some time at the resort, courtesy of the owners.

Washington...

"Thank you for seeing me General," Jim said.

"What can I do for you Mr. Roland?" retired General John Robins asked.

"Maybe it's what the Government Improvement Group can do for you General," Jim replied. "I understand that you were the Colonel in charge of the Mt. Weather rescue?"

"Yes but what does that have to do with anything?" John asked.

"Maybe nothing General," Jim said. "GIG owns a company resort up near Mt. Weather in the West Virginia area. The name of the resort is the Mt. Weather Resort, perhaps you've heard of us?"

"I can't say as I have. Call me John, please," John replied.

"Well, some of your troops checked out our resort during that fracas up there," Jim said, so I thought that you might have heard of the place."

"We checked out a lot of places in a 50 mile radius Jim, all the way back to Washington," John answered. "What is this about?"

"Do you remember a Sergeant Major by the name of Bill Jefferson?" Jim asked.

"Bill, sure, he was in charge of cutting off those welds. Say what does this have to do with anything that happened at Mt. Weather?" John asked, becoming very curious.

"The Sergeant Major moved into a development out in California recently named Freedom Village," Jim explained. "Anyway, the Corporation that owns that development is distantly related to the GIG; common ownership interests or something. The Sergeant Major mentioned to one of the employees of Freedom Village that you respected those three old codgers who were allegedly responsible for that whole mess. As it happens, the common ownership interest also holds those men in high regard and they suggested that you might want to enjoy a week at the resort at their expense. They also mentioned that your partner was the Secretary of DHS for a while, I believe he might have similar feelings and if he did, he would be welcome to spend a week at the resort too."

"Let me get this straight Jim," John said, "A corporation in California who has an owner-

ship interest in a corporation in West Virginia has invited me to spend a week at a West Virginia resort as their guests because I said something to a resident in that California community that was complimentary of the three guys behind the whole thing?”

“Actually it’s a Nevada corporation with an interest in a Virginia corporation, but other than that, you have a good grasp on the situation,” Jim said.

“And this is because I have a grudging respect for Gary Olsen, Ron Green and Clarence Rawlings, right?” John said. “What’s the name of these principals?”

“Well, it isn’t Olsen, Green and Rawlings,” Jim said, “I only know one name, John C. Hays. He seems to be the power behind the scenes.”

“And my partner, Raymond Marshall, the former head of ATF and one time Secretary of DHS is invited if he shares the same views?” Robins asked. “Do you have any idea how ludicrous this whole thing sounds?”

“General Robins,” Jim said, “I’m just the manager of a resort in West Virginia and I gave up trying to figure out the workings of the owners of the GIG a long time ago. Shall I tell them that you’re not interested?”

“Could you excuse me for a few minutes Jim?” John asked.

“Sure General,” Jim said.

“Why don’t you help yourself to some coffee and I’ll be back in a few minutes?” John suggested.

“Thank you sir, I’ll be right here,” Jim said.

A few minutes later...

“Jim Roland, meet Raymond Marshall,” John said.

“Pleased to meet you Mr. Marshall,” Jim acknowledged.

“What’s the catch Mr. Roland?” Ray Marshall asked.

“Excuse me sir, catch?” Jim asked.

“You heard me Mr. Roland, what’s the quid pro quo?” Marshall said.

“Well, the principal Mr. Hays does have one minor favor to ask,” Jim admitted.

“I knew it. What would that be Mr. Roland?” Marshall asked.

“Well, if either of you gentlemen find any shortcomings in the resort, Mr. Hays would like you to be honest and recommend improvements,” Jim explained. “And if you really enjoy the visit, he’d like to request an endorsement, if you would be willing.”

### Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 14 – You’re Kidding, Right?

“An endorsement?” Marshall said, “Did I hear you right?”

“Yes sir, recommendations for improvements and an endorsement, but only if you like the resort,” Jim replied.

“Ever hear the expression that if it sounds too good to be true it is?” Marshall asked Jim.

“Yes sir,” Jim said, “And if you really like the place, I’ve been instructed to sell you a membership at half the going rate, if you’d like one.”

“So it is an advertising promotion?” Robins asked.

“Yes sir,” Jim replied, “But you are under no obligation to buy a membership unless you really chose to. We don’t have any salesmen.”

“Thank you Mr. Roland,” Robins said, “We’ll get back to you.”

“You have my card gentlemen,” Jim said, “You may get our message center. Let me know either way and I’ll get back to you to work out the final details.”

Freedom Village...

It should be noted in passing that when the SM refused to drop the subject of the tanks being real, Derek gave Bill ‘the look’. It was that private message used by long time servicemen that essentially said, ‘you’re right, but you don’t want to know’. Bill got the message and dropped the subject. When Derek later asked for the General’s business card, Bill put 2 and 2 together and inspected the other equipment on display. Those Paladins were real enough and the M-1117’s shared the same quality, genuineness. The DPV’s were apparently homemade, but they were faithful duplications right down to the gun mounts. The only thing different about them was the American made diesel engines and an extra radio mount. Bill recognized the radio mount as being similar to the mounts used sometimes in civilian vehicles to quickly mount and dismount a radio to prevent it from being stolen.

Bill Jefferson was about to drop the whole matter when he remembered Colonel Robins saying that he had issued equipment to the three old guys and it included equipment just like the stuff on display, except for the DPV’s. Bill hadn’t made SM by going around stirring the crap and he wasn’t about to do that now. Neither was he one to open his mouth when it was better to just keep it shut. Besides, where would he and Myrna, his wife, have ever gotten a new triplewide at such a good price and at only 5% interest? Bill knew all about biting the hand that fed him. He was, nevertheless, a curious man and he made it his business to learn more about Freedom Village. The prices in the stores, he noticed, while a bit above PX prices, were substantially below MSRP. He also noticed that the cigarettes, while again higher than the PX, were absent the state tax

stamps just like the smokes at the PX, as was the liquor and everything else.

Bill talked with one of his new friends, who had been a supply Master Sergeant before he retired. The new friend worked part time in one of the warehouses and made the casual observation that if the Army had had a material handling setup like the one in this warehouse, his life would have been a whole lot easier. He also made a passing comment that there were enough goods in that warehouse to last for a full year, and it was just the dry goods warehouse. And the more Bill snooped, the stranger this place seemed to be. A lot of the retirees were working part time at the various facilities around Freedom Village. He decided to check with the property office to see what else he could learn. When he walked in, the receptionist, a middle-aged woman named Patti said, 'the job applications are over there' and barely gave him a second glance. Bill picked up an application, folded it and stuck it in his pocket, and then left.

When he got home, Bill looked over the 'job application'. It wasn't like any job application he'd ever seen. It asked for your MOS/AFSC/Rating, wanted you to detail your combat experience and so forth. It was more like a questionnaire you'd expect to have to fill out if you applied for one of those jobs in the ads in 'Soldier of Fortune' magazine. Bill decided to track Derek down the next day and ask some penetrating questions. He never got the chance. After dinner, Myrna answered the door.

"Bill, someone to see you," Myrna said.

"Hi Bill," Derek greeted him, "Fill out the job application yet?"

"I looked it over Derek," Bill said. "Come in, take a load off. Coffee?"

"Sure, black," Derek replied.

"That's quite the application form," Bill observed returning with the coffee. "Reads like a merc job resume. And, I looked over the rest of that equipment in that display, it's all real."

"True," Derek replied. "That's the stuff the Army issued my Dad and the others. Well, except for the DPV's. They had them built."

"You admit it?" Bill responded, shocked.

"You've checked out every facet of this operation Bill," Derek said, "What is your impression?"

"It looks like a survivalist's nirvana, Derek" Bill replied, "Right down to the one year supply of goods for the stores. Of course I didn't get a chance to check out all of the warehouses."

"There's a one year supply of everything Bill," Derek said.

“Your dad and his friends run this place?” Bill asked.

“It’s run by a guy named John C. Hays,” Derek replied. “And a couple of his friends.”

“One of them happen to be a tall, thin black man?” Bill asked. “Maybe in his mid-70’s?”

“So, why don’t you get that job application filled out and we’ll see if we can’t find a part time job for you,” Derek suggested. “A guy makes just enough on those jobs to pay his house payment each month.”

o

Washington...

“This is John Robins,” John spoke into the answering machine. “My partner and I would like to take you up on that offer of a week’s free stay at that resort of yours. Call me back.”

Jim grinned as he listened to the message on the machine. Before that week was over, they’d know everything they ever wanted to know about the General and his partner. He sent the boys out in California an email telling them that the General had taken the bait. If everything were copasetic, they’d set the hook and reel the two men in.

Freedom Village...

“So, Derek,” Gary said, “How did it go with SM Jefferson?”

“He’s pretty sharp Dad,” Derek said, “I’d say that he just about figured the whole thing out.”

“He has, has he?” Ron commented. “Well if he’s as smart as all that, maybe he should be in charge of our security.”

“How is the construction coming?” Derek asked.

“Well, the biodiesel plant is online, but until that crop matures, the only thing we have to convert is the used vegetable oils we’re picking up in the area,” Gary said, “And that doesn’t really amount to all that much. Once we can start extracting vegetable oils from the crop, we will start producing all of the fuel we need. The wind turbines and solar array are finished, so we have enough electricity to sell to the utility company. Your brother has finished his project, too. I don’t know how he does it, Derek, I really don’t. But, we have everything we need.”

“The last of the houses is in and we’re at 75% occupancy,” Derek reported.

"We need to get to full population fairly soon," Gary said. "I don't like the news coming out of the Middle East one bit. And I have a funny feeling; it's like we're due for another round of terrorist attacks. I think that this country has been through enough. Between the Clark affair, that war of Edward's with the Chinese and all of that government messing with the Constitution, the US has earned a rest."

"Well, we have a Republican President and a Republican Congress so maybe things will settle down," Derek suggested.

"Like hell Derek," Gary said, "He'll probably just wait until his second term and declare war on someone."

"You know Dad, for a 70-year old man, you still have the fire," Derek said. "Give the guy a break."

"Probably too many years of reading all of those survivalist stories, son," Gary admitted. "Just because we're getting too old to fight doesn't mean we're too old to be concerned. Anyway, the government is paying for the whole show. We put some of our money into some of those foreign investments and they're paying unbelievable interest rates. We're earning money at about the same rate as we're spending it."

Mt. Weather Resort...

"As you can see John, It isn't a large property, but we have plenty of recreational opportunities and guests can ride the ATV's in the surrounding area. We're thinking of acquiring more land so that we have our own hunting preserve," Jim explained.

"How did you happen to come up with the name Mt. Weather Resort?" John asked. "Mt. Weather is in Bluemont, Virginia."

"Actually, it's not all that far by ATV John," Jim replied. "GIG bought this Lodge shortly before all those goings on at Mt. Weather as a corporate retreat. But, they decided to turn it into a commercial venture and capitalize on the fact that the Lodge isn't all that far from Mt. Weather."

"Do you have a lot of members?" John asked.

"Yes and no," Jim responded. "All of the residents of Freedom Village out in California have a membership by virtue of being residents of that community. Like I told you, there is a corporate link. But, from time to time, we sell a membership to like-minded individuals."

"What do you mean by like-minded individuals?" Ray Marshall asked.

"The organization is fairly conservative politically and is a strong believer in supporting and defending the Constitution," Jim replied. "And, frankly, most of the people involved



have a bit of a survivalist mentality. This resort is stocked with enough supplies to support a full contingent of guests for a full year.”

“So, it really is sort of like Mt. Weather,” Ray observed.

“In some ways, I suppose,” Jim acknowledged, “But we don’t have armed guards or anything.”

“It sounds to me like you know quite a bit about Mt. Weather,” John said.

“Only what I read on the Internet John,” Jim replied.

o

“You know Ray,” John said, “This place is mighty peculiar. It would have made a perfect operating base for those people who attacked Mt. Weather.

“I told that butthead Costello that if I got out of Mt. Weather, I was going to retire and hunt whoever did it down. But, it wasn’t to turn them in; it was to join them. They’re obviously smart, resourceful and can put a plan together.”

“It’s funny you should say that Ray,” John said, “I recall a conversation with SM Jefferson where I sort of said the same thing. The only people hurt in that whole mess were some of your FEMA guards, as I recall.”

“They were more like the Gestapo, John,” Ray replied. “If I had stayed on, I was going to make some major changes to the whole DHS.”

“Really? What for example?” John asked. “We’ve never discussed this before.”

“The original charter of DHS was one single overriding responsibility: to make America more secure. Along with the sweeping transformation within the FBI, the establishment of the Department of Defense’s US Northern Command, and the creation of the multi-agency Terrorist Threat Integration Center and Terrorist Screening Center, America was supposed to be better prepared to prevent, disrupt, and respond to terrorist attacks than ever before,” Ray explained. “Somewhere along the line, that all changed. They ended up establishing all of those centers, you remember, the ones that were blown up on the college campuses. And, FEMA got a big head and decided to do more than just manage emergencies.”

## Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 15 – New Members

Freedom Village...

“And Jim thinks that they’re ok?” Ron asked.

“They seem to have put it together like SM Jefferson did, although they haven’t said anything,” Gary reported.

“I don’t know about this,” Clarence objected. “If we invite them in and they turn out to be something other than we expect...”

“We’ll have to introduce them to the Cemetery,” Gary finished the sentence.

“Ok Gar-Bear, but let’s do this in stages,” Ron suggested. “Have Derek make an offer to SM Jefferson to be the head of security and bring him fully into the loop. If that works out ok, we’ll bring the General and that ATF guy in.”

o

“So there you have it Bill,” Derek said, “You’ve been offered the head of security position.”

“But that’s your job,” Bill protested, “What are you going to do?”

“I’m going to work on pulling this group of people into a cohesive unit,” Derek replied. “That will be part of your job too Bill. Now, if you’re in, there are a lot of things you need to see. Otherwise, we’ll just stop right here and you won’t need to know anything more.”

“I’m not much of a desk pounder,” Bill said, “But ok, I’m in.”

“Good, let me show you the Underground City,” Derek said.

“What Underground City?” Bill asked.

“It’s an old mine that we equipped as a shelter Bill,” Derek said, “Everything you see in Freedom Village is duplicated inside the mine.”

“That means that you have a 2 year supply of everything,” Bill whistled, “And does it have its own generating equipment and everything besides?”

“Yep. Plus our armory,” Derek explained.

“Armory?” Bill asked. “Well I guess that makes sense, it wouldn’t do you much good to have those tanks and equipment without munitions, would it?”

“Bill, we have enough equipment to fully outfit 3 companies of infantry plus the crews for all of that military equipment,” Derek explained. “You’ll have to meet my brother, he gives a whole new meaning to the term scrounger.”

“When do I get to meet your Dad?” Bill asked.

“You already have, Bill,” Derek laughed, “You just didn’t recognize him.”

“You mean...” Bill started to say.

“Bill, John Coffee Hays was one of the original Texas Rangers back in the early 1800’s,” Derek said. “Dad just liked the name and took it as one of his several aliases.”

“So the other two guys are Clarence and Ron, huh?” Bill asked. “Well, I sort of figured that one guy was Clarence, but I thought your father was taller.”

“6’6” and all muscle?” Derek said, “Nope 5’5” and old. And they are rich that much is true. They’ve been collecting rewards on themselves for quite a while.”

“And they were behind the Mt. Weather thing?” Bill asked.

“Probably everything you’ve ever heard about them is true and more,” Derek said. “In the early days, back when Clark took over the country, they didn’t play nice. But, after they took out the federal building in LA, they lost their taste for bloodshed. Since then, the group has only killed out of absolute necessity.”

“But why the buildup now?” Bill asked. “We have a pro-gun Republican President, a Republican Congress and things are on a pretty even keel.”

“My Dad seems to think we’re in for another round of terrorist attacks,” Derek replied.

“You mean from someone other than the Palmdale Militia turned PFLA turned Freedom Riders, huh?” Bill half asked.

“He thinks the Muslims have had about all they can take of Israel and they blame us, so he thinks they’re going to attack the US,” Derek responded.

“I thought that all ended when we pulled out troops out of Iraq,” Bill said.

“We left that country in one hell of a mess, Bill,” Derek replied. “And then those Muslim fundamentalists took over the democratic government we were trying to establish and, well hell, you know the story.”

“President Santorum will never let them get away with anything like that,” Bill suggested.

“Bill, DHS is a joke, you know that. All the President can do is react. Dad thinks that

Santorum won't start a war with the Muslims like Bush did," Derek commented.

"Whatever happened to Bush?" Bill asked.

"He's out of the hospital and doing well from what I understand," Derek replied.

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Washington...

"And you think that the Muslims are staging for an attack on this country?" Santorum asked.

"Mr. President, there is every indication that they are, yes," Condi Rice replied. "But with no better intelligence than we have, we don't have any idea what they're planning. It could be anything from hitting us with nukes, taking out the power grid or the pipelines, hijacking and crashing aircraft to something as simple as stirring up a series of racial incidents and starting a black vs. white race war."

"Do you have any recommendations?" the President asked.

"It's pretty hard to make recommendations when we don't know what they're planning, Mr. President," Condi replied, "But you ought to be working with DHS on that and maybe they ought to raise the Threat Level a notch or two. I do not believe that Green is an appropriate level. It should be Yellow or perhaps Orange."

"OK, I talk to the Secretary about that Condi thanks," Santorum said, "Anything else?"

"No sir," Condi replied.

"Would you ask Rob to step in on your way out, please?" Santorum requested.

"Yes Sir," Condi acknowledged.

"Yes Mr. President?" Rob asked.

"Have you been keeping an eye on that Freedom Village out in California?" Santorum asked.

"Yes Sir. They have completed construction and are at about 95% occupancy as of the moment," Rob reported.

"And do we have any more information on them?" the President asked.

"The FBI did a drive by observation Mr. President," Rob said, "They are flying the Gadsden flag, the US flag and a California flag. And the FBI seems to think that the display of

tanks and other military equipment is not a display of fake equipment, but real equipment.”

“Is it that PFLA group?” Santorum asked.

“They call themselves the Freedom Riders now,” Rob said, “But we think so, yes. They seem to be affiliated with a resort in West Virginia called the Mt. Weather Resort, too.”

“What do you know about that place?” Santorum asked.

“Not much Mr. President,” Rob admitted. “They had only 10 acres, but recently bought another 1,000 acres, give or take. Claimed that they intend to turn it into a private game preserve and hunting club. They apparently have 2 new members; do you remember Ray Marshall and General John Robins?”

“Marshall was the ATF guy who was the Secretary of DHS for a while wasn’t he?” Santorum said “And there was a Colonel Robins in charge of the rescue at Mt. Weather.”

“Same guy. Costello promoted him to Brigadier General after the event, but he retired,” Rob explained. “Marshall was the Secretary of DHS during the crisis. He apparently resigned during the crisis and eventually the two men got together and formed a security consulting business.”

“These Freedom Riders you mentioned; what can you tell me about them?” Santorum asked.

“They seem to have their roots in that Palmdale Militia group,” Rob explained. “Then they operated under the PFLA name for a while and reappeared later as the Freedom Riders.”

“Can we connect them to any wrong doing?” Santorum asked.

“No sir,” Rob replied, “But that rash of armory thefts started and ended about the time they were starting up Freedom Village.”

“But that stopped didn’t it?” Santorum observed.

“Yes Sir, right after you asked me about it,” Rob acknowledged. “Whoever it was stole enough equipment for about 3 companies of infantry and enough munitions for the next World War. And then, it just stopped. As I told you, the FBI didn’t have a clue and ATF never came up with anything either.”

“Anyone ever think to search that Freedom Village?” Santorum asked.

“No sir, we didn’t even have enough suspicions to act under the USA Patriot Act and you know how low the threshold is under that law.” Rob reported.

“Well, if it is those three guys from Palmdale behind all of this, we may need their help,” Santorum observed.

“Sir?” Rob asked.

“Condi thinks there’s something brewing with the Muslim’s, but she has no idea what,” Santorum explained. “If she’s right and that bunch of guys rides to the country’s rescue, I’ll probably end up having to pardon them for all of their sins, real and imagined.”

“A lot of people think they were behind that attack on Mt. Weather, Mr. President,” Rob noted. “Apparently, there was a break in their numbers after that. Some of the group moved to Wyoming.”

“Who were they?” Santorum asked.

“A retired Army Sergeant Major named Raymond ‘Ray’ Benton, his wife Stacy, his stepson Ryan who was also in the Army and liaison between group and the Army for a while and his wife Jennifer, a doctor,” Rob said consulting his notes. “Anyway they broke off about the time that Freedom Village started up. Ryan was the one who turned the three men in and collected that \$250 million reward. We checked their bank records but could only account for about \$27 million of the money. The daughter-in-law, Jennifer used a lot of the money to open up a medical clinic in Jackson.”

“Interesting,” Santorum commented, “So in effect, they have 3 locations, one in West Virginia, one in Wyoming and the community in California.”

“There is nothing to connect those people with the California or West Virginia operations, sir,” Rob pointed out.

“There isn’t any hard evidence connecting anyone to anything is there Rob?” Santorum grinned.

“No sir, I’m afraid not.” Rob admitted.

## Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 16 – Labor Day Picnic

Tehran, Iran...

Abdullah bin Laden had just finished explaining his plans for the attack on America to the Assembly of Experts. The attack financed by his father in 2001 was a dismal failure in many ways. Rather than bringing the American government to its knees, they had managed to kill only about 3,000 Americans. Perhaps if that 4th plane hadn't crashed in the field in Pennsylvania, it might have been different, or, perhaps not. Since 2003, various splinter groups and al Qaeda cells had been embedding people in the US. Many died in Clark's bombings and the Chinese attacks, but it was only a setback, not an end of the plan. Now, they were ready to strike. It would have been nice to have some of those Russian portable nuclear weapons, but they were going to do without. His greatest concern was that the US had already experienced two major disruptions and that the American people would endure for quite a while before they felt Allah's wrath. On the other hand, taking down the pipeline system, the electrical power grids and their transportation system simultaneously would cause chaos and over time bring the infidels down, this time for good.

Had the Assembly of Experts acted sooner, he would have launched his assault on America's infrastructure on their Independence Day and shown them what it was like to be independent of electrical power, natural gas and water. His attack was intended to poison water supplies, take out select portions of the electrical grid and disrupt delivery of hydrocarbons through America's network of pipelines. This wasn't any feeble attempt to inconvenience the Americans either. If the plan worked, it might take the Americans years to catch all of his people. The goal was to bring the systems down and keep them down.

Washington...

"I don't care what your intelligence reports are telling you Mr. Secretary," the President snapped, "Condi says that we should be at Yellow or Orange. So I'll grant you a single compromise, this one time. You raise the threat level to Yellow immediately."

"But Mr. President, next Monday is Labor Day," the Secretary of DHS insisted.

"I don't care if it screws up every celebration planned for Labor Day," Santorum responded. "If I were the terrorists, I'd strike on a holiday. There would be large concentrations of people attending parades and community events. It would be awfully easy to hurt a lot of people at one time."

"This will cause big backups at the airports, Mr. President," the Secretary insisted. "But it's your political future that's at stake, not mine."

"If you would have asked me 3 months before the election, I would have told you I couldn't win," Santorum said, "But I did win and I'm going to do the job the American

people expect of me. And you, Mr. Secretary, are going to do the job they expect of you. Even if we were at threat level Red, some terrorist activity would be possible. And it could be anything, so don't slack off in any area."

"Yes sir," the Secretary grumbled.

Freedom Village...

"Since there are only 4 empty homes, Derek, that puts us at 98% occupancy," Gary beamed. "You can leave those four homes empty for contingencies. How is Bill working out?"

"He's a real winner Dad," Derek said, "Between Bill and the others, we have almost a company of infantry and the vehicles manned. The supplies were restocked last week so between the shelter and the warehouses, we're good for a 2-year period. We replanted and they're almost done processing the canola oil into biodiesel."

"I never thought I'd see the day where it paid to have all electric homes, but with the supplemental solar heating of the water and the turbines and array, the only propane we need is for our grills," Gary grinned.

"We have a 1,000 gallon refill tank for the propane bottles, too," Derek said.

"Good because we're planning a big shindig for Labor Day," Gary grinned.

"We gonna have some chicken, or are you just going to do steaks and burgers and dogs, Gary?" Clarence asked.

"Clarence, if you want grilled chicken we'll have several grills going with nothing but chicken. Will that do?" Gary asked.

"We gonna have watermelon, too?" Clarence asked.

"Yes and greens and grits if you want them, partner," Ron laughed.

"Don't want no grits, but greens would be nice," Clarence responded, "They go good with chicken."

"I'll take your word for that Clarence," Gary said. "I'm going to stick with hot dogs and potato salad."

"Where is that new doctor we hired from?" Ron asked, "And what kind of name is Eti-had?"

"It's Persian, or Iranian if you prefer, Ron," Gary explained "His father and Bill Josephson were our doctors for years."



“Josephson sounds American,” Ron said.

“It was the anglicized version of his first name,” Gary replied. “And the middle initial was his first name. I forget what he told me about where the William came from.”

“Anyone heard from Ray and Ryan?” Derek asked.

“They’re doing great,” Gary said, “Ray called the other day. They’re thinking of coming down here for a visit one of these days. Jennifer’s clinic is up and running. And Ray and Ryan have built their own little community about 30 miles northwest of Jackson Hole. Sort of a miniature version of Freedom Village.”

“I sure miss having them here,” Clarence commented.

“Like I said Clarence, having them in Wyoming is an investment in the future,” Gary reminded his friend, “Maybe if TSHTF, we’ll have to have a place up north where we can lay low or operate out of. Who knows?”

Jackson...

Ray had named their development Benton Village. Money wasn’t much of an issue so they started out with a full section of land, 640 acres. Three quarters of the land was reserved for farming. On the other 160 acres, they began to build a community of their own. They first put in outbuildings like a barn and machine shed. Then, they dug a 6” well. Ray ordered several truckloads of hay and then bought livestock. He got dairy cows, feeder cattle, a bull, sows and a boar and chickens. While the contractor was putting in the farm buildings, Ray hired a contractor to begin putting in basements. When the construction contractor finished the barn, machine shed and other buildings, Ray got him started building houses.

Since there wasn’t a mine on the property, Ray put in a large community building, or commons, with a basement of its own. Meanwhile Ryan had located a diesel generator for backup power and had the local distributor put in a large underground diesel tank. The power company ran lines to the development for about \$10 thousand a mile and an electrician hooked up the electricity and wired in the generator and automatic transfer switches. The standby generator was in the basement of the common building.

It got pretty cold in the Jackson Hole area during the winter so they put in a propane tank large enough to service the planned 25 homes for a full year or more. They used propane fueled stoves, hot water heaters, furnaces and dryers and found that they could get them inexpensively if they bought enough for all 25 homes in one purchase. The same thing applied for the lumber to build the homes. While Ray and Ryan were talking to the lumberyard about getting the lumber for one home, the owner said that if they contracted for the lumber for all 25 homes, he could make a volume purchase and pass the savings on to them.

They finished building Benton Village just about the same time that Jennifer finished her clinic and they began to sell the homes to retired military and retired police officers. After they had most of the homes sold, Ray happened to call Gary and visit with him. Gary told him how well Freedom Village had turned out and Ray suggested that perhaps Stacy, Ryan Jennifer and he could visit sometime soon. This was the Friday before Labor Day.

Ray and Ryan had brought their own guns and a small assortment of the M16's and MP5's. They hadn't wanted to run the guys down in California short on their arms, so they only took enough to equip the four of them with one of each of the weapons. Stacy preferred the M-9 and so did Ryan, so rather than taking the 10mm weapons, they took the 9mm MP5SD5's that Gary didn't care for. They were pretty well set for guns and ammo. The M16/M203's were probably more than they needed, but they were sort of comfort guns. Ray didn't bring any of the hand grenades, the 40mm grenades for the M203's were enough. But he did bring their Interceptor vests and the plates as a precaution. Most of the people who bought homes from them had their own assortment of firearms anyway, so neither Ray nor Ryan felt the need to equip the residents.

Freedom Village...Labor Day...2013...

They started off early in the morning setting up the picnic tables, gas grills and icing down the beverages and watermelon for later that day. Ron was in charge of cooking the steaks, as always, and Clarence volunteered to cook the chicken so that it was 'cooked right'. Since Gary was the hotdog lover, he volunteered to do those and Derek said he would handle the burgers.

Several of the other residents pitched in and before long, everything was ready for the picnic. There was ice-cold beer for anyone who wanted a few, and soft drinks, iced tea and lemonade for the people who didn't drink and the kids. Several women had gotten together and whipped up large batches of potato salad, pasta salad, and relish trays. They started cooking around 2pm and by 3:30pm everyone had filled a plate and they were sitting around visiting and just enjoying the day. They ate until most everyone was bursting a seam and they moved on to the watermelon. After they finished, they started to clean up the mess and put the food away. It had been a pleasant day and it appeared that everyone had enjoyed himself or herself.

Gary flipped on the TV to catch the news. CNN was broadcasting what appeared to be news of some sort of disaster or something, but Gar-Bear didn't pay much attention, he was more interested in playing games on his computer. The phone rang and Sharon answered it.

"Gary, Ron seems to be pretty excited, he said for you to quote drag your sorry butt over there end quote," Sharon said. "Tell Ronald to watch his language, would you?"

"Ok dear," Gary said, "I'll go see what is so important. Must be about the disaster they

were talking about on CNN.”

“What disaster?” Sharon asked.

“I really didn’t pay any attention, something about an airplane crash or something,” Gary explained. “You might want to put it back on and see what it’s all about, I’m going over to Ron’s.”

Washington...White House Situation Room...

“How many aircraft were involved?” Santorum asked.

“It appears that 6 aircraft were hijacked Mr. President,” the Secretary of DHS said, “We scrambled fighters and all six planes had to be shot down when they headed for major cities.”

“Any survivors?” Santorum asked.

“It doesn’t appear so, no.”

“What about the power outages?” Santorum asked.

“Nationwide outage, I’m afraid and these were well executed attacks,” the Secretary said. “Several power plants were seriously damaged as were portions of the grid. But it gets worse Mr. President. We don’t have a count yet, but that pipeline hub in Kansas City as well as several other pipelines were damaged.”

“Do you have any more good news for me?” Santorum asked, “No nukes?”

“No sir, no nukes,” the Secretary replied, “But the extent of the outages and the damage will require extreme measures on your part.”

“Like what for instance?” Santorum asked.

“I recommend you declare martial law and suspend Posse Comitatus to begin with,” the Secretary responded, “And of course you will want to transfer power to FEMA.”

“The people didn’t elect FEMA to run this country and until they do, I’ll take only such action as is necessary,” Santorum snapped, “We will declare martial law for tonight only and assess the situation. I will not suspend Posse Comitatus or Habeas Corpus or any other provision of the law. And Mr. Secretary, if you can’t do the job you’re supposed to do, I will find someone who can.”

### Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 17 – Red Alert

One of the problems, at least from my perspective, was that the bin Laden family never actually participated in any of their skullduggery. Hell, Osama didn't even plan the World Trade building attack in 2001; he just paid for it. And, Abdullah bin Laden was no fool either; he was in Tehran. He had able Lieutenants to direct the US operations. Everyone gave far too much credit to the Laden or bin Laden or whatever family. Actually those Palestinian suicide bombers deserved more respect than that family; at least the bombers believed in their cause enough to die for it.

Freedom Village...

"What the hell is so important Ronald?" Gary asked, "I was kicked back playing games on my computer."

"You remember telling Clarence something about TSHTF?" Ron asked.

"Yeah, so what?" Gary asked.

"Duck," Ron said using an attention getting tone.

"What the hell happened and how come we didn't know anything about it?" Gary asked.

"We didn't know anything about it because we're totally independent in this community of ours," Ron explained. "As to what happened, as near as I can tell 6 jets were hijacked and had to be shot down, the electrical grid is down nationwide and several pipelines were attacked."

"Probably Kansas City," Gary said, "It's a hub."

"Kansas City and several other locations," Ron confirmed. "The only thing that wasn't attacked was the water supply."

"No nukes?" Gary asked.

"Not as far as I know, no," Ron said.

"Well, have Derek put us on Red Alert for now," Gary suggested. "Have them fire up those tanks and M-1117's and put up a protective shield around the Village. We'd better get everyone armed, too."

"I'll get Derek and Bill on it," Ron agreed. "What now Jefe?"

"I supposed that we'd better just sit tight until we get confirmation that those ragheads are behind all of this," Gary chuckled, "Then, we're going to kick butt and take names."

“Hey guys,” Clarence said, “Did you hear the news?”

“We’re going on Red Alert Clarence,” Ron replied, “And old Gar-Bear says we’re going to kick butt and take names.”

“What we need to know their names for?” Clarence asked.

“Go get your FAL, MP5 and your other equipment, pal,” Gary suggested, “It’s going to be a long night.”

“Ron did you try to raise Ray on the radio?” Gary asked.

“What for?” Ron replied, “The phones are still up.”

“How did they manage to overlook the phones?” Gary asked. “I’ll call Ray; you get busy with Derek and Bill.”

Sometime between when Ron had checked the phones and when Gary picked up the phone to call Ray, someone took out several telephone switching centers. The phone line was dead. Gary got Ray on the satellite phone and asked what their situation was.

“We’re as snug as a bug in a rug Gary,” Ray announced. “Jennifer stayed in Jackson to take care of any people that need immediate medical treatment and then Ryan will bring her back here.”

“I put the Village on Red alert and we’re bringing out the big guns,” Gary explained. “If you need anything, just call.”

“I will do that Gary, although by the time you could get here we’d probably have the problems solved ourselves,” Ray acknowledged.

“Jim this is Gary, how are things at the resort?” Gary asked Jim.

“We’re in good shape Gary, “Ray and John showed up a while ago so everything is copasetic.”

“We got all our news off of CNN and FOX, do you know anything more than that?” Gary asked.

“Not really, no,” Jim replied.

“We’re on Red Alert here, so govern yourselves accordingly,” Gary urged.

“Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition?” Jim asked.

“Something like that, yes,” Gary replied.

Washington...White House Situation Room...

Mr. President, I really think everyone should move to Mt. Weather," the Secretary suggested.

"Why, someone drop a bomb?" Santorum asked.

"Not that I know of, no sir," the Secretary replied.

"In that case, we'll be fine right here," Santorum said. "Did we get martial law declared and the National Guard out?"

"Yes sir, all of the Governors are turning out their Guards and they're being sent to the large cities. But, I really think you should reconsider the martial law decision, we could have real trouble in some of the big cities."

"Then I'll extend martial law if I need to," Santorum explained. "Why is everyone in such a rush to take away everyone's rights? People died to get us these rights and one hell of a lot more died to keep them for us."

"There is one other matter, Mr. President," The Secretary said.

"Well?" Santorum demanded.

"Mr. President, there's this group out in eastern California with this survivalist community," the Secretary said, "How do we know they're not behind this?"

"Are you specifically referring to Freedom Village?" Santorum asked.

"Yes sir, I think that those three guys..." the Secretary started to say.

"Are going to bail this country out again, probably," Santorum laughed. "I had them checked out. Did you know that they have 3 locations around the country including one just a few miles from your precious Mt. Weather?"

"Uh, no sir, maybe we should arrest them," the Secretary suggested.

"On what charge?" Santorum asked. "Did you know that your predecessor Ray Marshall is part of the group in West Virginia?"

"I didn't know anything about the group in West Virginia, Mr. President, "But if Ray is part of the group I suppose not," the Secretary said.

"And why is that Mr. Secretary, do you think that just because he was the head of DHS for a few weeks that he's exempt from the law?" Santorum was on a roll.

“Yes Sir, I mean No Sir,” the Secretary responded.

“Is your deputy as dumb as you are?” Santorum asked.

“No Sir, he’s a real sharp fellow,” the Secretary said.

“Good, why don’t you go ask him what you should do next?” Santorum asked rhetorically.

“But he works for me!” the Secretary protested.

“Not for much longer he doesn’t,” Santorum said, “Tell me what threat level are we on now?”

“Red of course.”

“Well, you’re a real good barn door closer, I’ll give you that,” Santorum laughed in spite of himself.

Freedom Village...

“So the phones are out too?” Ron asked.

“Yes, I had to use the sat phone,” Gary replied.

“At least they didn’t get the water supply,” Ron said.

“That’s twice you’ve said that, how do you know?” Gary asked.

“I guess I don’t Gar-Bear,” Ron admitted.

“I hope the White House thinks about that,” Gary observed.

“Well, we have those military radios in storage. We could get Damon to dig one out and send a message to the military to warn the White House,” Clarence suggested.

“Clarence, you’re a genius,” Gary smiled. “Where’s Damon?”

“He’s with Derek, playing around with that tank,” Clarence said.

“Be right back guys,” Gary announced.

“So, Damon can you get a long range military radio up and running?” Gary asked.

“I suppose, why?” Damon asked.

“Get one up and start broadcasting on the Guard frequency,” Gary said, “Warn them that there is a possibility that the water supplies may have been compromised and ask them to pass it up the chain of command.”

“Why would they believe me?” Damon asked.

“Tell them the message is from Gary Olsen, Ron Green and Clarence Rawlings, son,” Gary said. “We may get blamed, but it will be worth it if these terrorists have done something to the water.”

Damon left to dig around in the Underground City. He’d carefully stored the military comm gear somewhere in there, if he could just remember where. Eventually, he found it and had it up and running. He took the most powerful transmitter he had that had the Guard frequency and began to broadcast a message.

“This is Damon Olsen in Freedom Village. I am broadcasting on the Guard frequency for any military unit who can receive this transmission. Gary Olsen, Ron Green and Clarence Rawlings suspect that the terrorists may have compromised the water supply. If you receive this transmission, please forward this message to the National Command Authority.”

It wasn’t exactly what his Dad had told him but it was close enough. Damon broadcast the same message every 20 minutes for most of the night. He finally fell asleep at the transmitter waiting for the next 20-minute interval. Damon received no acknowledgment of his transmission. However, several military receivers heard the transmission and forwarded up the chain of command to the NCA, President Santorum.

Washington...White House Situation Room...

“Mr. President,” the Chairman said, “We’ve been receiving a strange radio transmission on the guard frequency once every 20 minutes for several hours.”

“What is the message, General?” Santorum asked.

“I wrote it down for you Mr. President,” the Chairman said, “here.”

“This is Damon Olsen in Freedom Village. I am broadcasting on the Guard frequency for any military unit who can receive this transmission. Gary Olsen, Ron Green and Clarence Rawlings suspect that the terrorists may have compromised the water supply. If you receive this transmission, please forward this message to the National Command Authority.”

“General, get your people to start checking the major water supplies around the country,” Santorum ordered. “If this warning is correct, we could have a real problem. We’d better put out a message on the EAS telling everyone to avoid drinking tap water until



we've tested the water supplies. And get Air Force One ready to fly, I'm going to California."

### **Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 18 – We’re All In This Together**

“But Mr. President, you can’t,” the Chairman said.

“I beg your pardon?” Santorum snapped. “Is the aircraft broken?”

“No sir, what I mean to say is that you shouldn’t leave the White House,” the Chairman backtracked.

“Do we still have communications between the Situation Room and Air Force One?” Santorum asked.

“Yes Sir,” the General replied.

“Then get the plane ready, General,” Santorum snapped, again.

Aboard Air Force One, somewhere over the Midwest...

“How are we going to get to Blythe, General?” Santorum asked.

“Mr. President, we’re going to land in Yuma and fly a Marine helicopter to Freedom Village,” the General explained.

“General get someone to get a hold of that Olsen boy on the radio,” Santorum directed. “If I recall, we gave those three men a bunch of Stingers. I don’t want to get my butt flamed.”

“I’ll get someone on it right away, sir,” the Chairman acknowledged.

Freedom Village...

“This is the US Marine Corps calling Damon Olsen on Guard, do you copy?” the radio blared.

“Uh, this is Damon Olsen, come back,” Damon replied.

“This is the US Marine Corps, may we have permission to land?” the pilot radioed.

“Standby one,” Damon said.

“Dad, I’ve got the Marine Corps on the Guard frequency, they want permission to land,” Damon said.

“So give them permission to land Damon,” Gary said.

“What are the Marine Corps doing here?” Clarence asked.

“How the hell do I know?” Gary said, “Maybe they want a place to land and wash their helicopter?”

The chopper pulled in for a smart landing, and an officer got out of the passenger compartment.

“Who is Gary Olsen?” the officer asked.

“Who wants to know,” Gary asked back.

“The President of the United States, sir. He’s on his way here to meet with Gary Olsen,” the officer explained.

“I’m Gary Olsen Captain, but I don’t remember inviting the President here,” Gary acknowledged.

“I understand it was a spur of the moment decision Mr. Olsen,” the Captain said, “Does the President’s helicopter have permission to land?”

“Well why not Captain, we have some leftovers from today’s picnic,” Gary laughed.

“That was yesterday’s picnic,” Ron said. “Jeez Gar-Bear, the President of the United States comes half way across the country to see us and you offer him leftover potato salad?”

“There’s some chicken left over too, Ron,” Clarence added.

“I wonder what he wants.” Gary speculated. “I guess he must have gotten my message about the water, huh?”

“Nah, Gar-Bear, he just flew 3,000 miles to get some leftover chicken and potato salad.” Ron replied sarcastically.

The second Marine helicopter landed and a General and a man they presumed was the President got out.

“I’m Rick Santorum,” the President said. “Let’s see, your Gary Olsen, your Clarence Rawlings and that means this other guy must be Ron Green.”

“I don’t believe we’ve been formally introduced,” Gary said.

“That’s all right Gary, I’ve read your file,” the President said holding his forefinger and thumb about 3” apart.

“And yours too guys,” he said holding the finger and thumb the same distance apart.

“To what do we owe the pleasure, Mr. President?” Gary asked.

“I got your message and we’re checking the water supplies,” Santorum said. “I wanted to thank you personally and see this community of yours.”

“It’s kind of dark, Mr. President,” Gary said.

“Say you wouldn’t happen to have any leftovers from your Labor Day picnic, would you?” Santorum asked, “I haven’t eaten in hours.”

“We got some chicken and potato salad,” Clarence said.

“That would be just fine Clarence, you guys can show me around in the morning,” Santorum said.

“While you’re out here in California eating leftovers, who is running the country?” Ron asked.

“I am, aren’t modern communications wonderful?” Santorum smiled.

“Say you wouldn’t happen to have any leftover tanks or artillery or missiles lying around would you?” Gary asked.

“I suppose that depends upon how good that leftover chicken is,” Santorum laughed.

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“Guys, I’m really impressed,” the President said, “Do you have the same setup in West Virginia and in Wyoming?”

“The Mt. Weather Resort is equipped for survival,” Gary said, “But Ray Benton has his own operation up in Wyoming.”

“Funded with the reward money Ryan got for turning you in?” Santorum asked.

“As a matter of fact yes,” Gary said. “What about those tanks and artillery and missiles?”

“Why don’t you just steal them the same as you did the rifles and ammunition?” Santorum asked.

“It would be easier if you just gave them to us,” Gary said, “Then you would know for sure where they are.”

“Anything else guys?” Santorum asked.

“Now that you mention it, how’s that Secretary for the Homeland Security Department working out?” Gary asked.

“Why?” Santorum asked.

“Ray Marshall got a pretty raw deal from that Costello,” Gary said, “And if you’re looking for someone who knows what they doing, you might look him up.”

“Have someone give a list of what you want to that Marine Corps Captain and I’ll consider your request,” Santorum said.

Washington...White House Situation Room...

“It’s a good thing we checked the water Mr. President,” the Chairman said, “Several of the major water supplies were contaminated.”

“What’s the situation in the major cities, General?” Santorum asked.

“The National Guard is pretty much keeping a lid on things, although I’d recommend sending in some regular Army troops into Los Angeles and New York,” the General replied.

“Is there a lot of looting and trouble?” Santorum asked.

“No, but if we want to avoid martial law, a few more troops might help keep the lid on things, Mr. President.”

“Don’t put in any more than you have to General,” the President directed. “I suppose we ought to consider this list the Freedom Riders gave us.”

“What do they want?” the General asked.

“Two more M1117’s and spare parts for 4 of the vehicles,” Santorum replied.

“Is that it?” the General asked.

“No, what’s an M-14 mine and a MK3A2 grenade?” Santorum asked.

“Dangerous, but primarily non-lethal weapons, Mr. President,” the General summarized.

“That’s what they want General, 2 M-1117’s, spare parts and the M-14 and MK3A2 grenades,” Santorum said. “Do you have any problem with our giving them these things?”

“Not as long as they use them on the bad guys instead of us, no,” the General replied.

“They saved a lot of lives with that warning General, give them what they want.”

“Yes sir,” the General replied.

Per the written list the Freedom Riders had given the Captain, the General had one M-1117 with spare parts delivered to Wyoming and the same delivered to the Mt. Weather Resort. The remaining items went to Freedom Village. The terrorists had continued their strikes, taking down additional pipelines and grid components ahead of the repair attempts. Despite dispatching most of the Army and Marine infantry forces available, the military was unable to halt the continuing attacks on the infrastructure. The President had ordered stringent security measures for the airline industry and Amtrak and public transportation slowly ground to a halt.

Frustrated by the Secretary for Home Security, the President asked Ray Marshall to come to the White House for a visit. Having had a bad previous experience in the position, Marshall didn't care if he got the job or not. He didn't pull any punches and he told the President exactly what mistakes had been made at Mt. Weather and who had made them, including his shortcomings in the matter. His greatest shortcomings were his failures to have his people communicate complete information to him and his efforts to try and please the President rather than do his job. Ray Marshall made no excuses. And, Ray Marshall got the job for a second time. General John Robins and his wife moved to Freedom Village.

30Sep13...Freedom Village...

“The problem with the Army,” Bill said, “Is that they don't think outside of the box.”

“What's that mean in English?” Clarence asked.

“*Improvise. Adapt. Overcome*,” Gary said before anyone could reply. “It's a term they use to describe people who become such a slave to their computer programs that they lose the ability to think, Clarence.”

“I couldn't have explained it better myself, Gary,” Bill said.

“I thought the Army used rifles and tanks, not computers,” Clarence mumbled.

Obviously the Army needed a little help from people who always thought out of the box.

### Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 19 – Outside the Box

The US is a fairly large country and it wasn't as if the people going around damaging the infrastructure were wearing signs saying 'here I am'. On the other hand, the good guys, aka the Freedom Riders, had plenty of experience doing exactly what these terrorists were doing and they knew how the game was played. The terrorists seemed to be pretty well organized and well-funded. Hmm, there was something quite familiar about that too. It was time for a major skull session and the three old geezers called for a council of war. Gary sent word to Jim for him to drive to California and called Ray on the sat phone and asked if he and Ryan could make a trip to California.

"These people are doing about what we did folks," Gary opened the meeting, "So how do we stop them? They seem to have enough money to move around freely and they definitely have a well thought out plan."

"Well, do we have any information on where they've hit so far?" Ray asked. "If we had a specific chronology, we could map it out and pick the targets we would hit next if it was us doing the terrorism."

"No, but I expect we could get that information," Gary said, "Ray Marshall got his old job back as the Secretary of DHS."

"I'm going to have trouble with this," Ron said, "I'm not used to working with the government instead of against them."

"It does feel a little strange partner, I'll admit that," Gary agreed, "But we're all in this together and it's just like Dubya said, either you're on our side or you're the enemy."

"If we have an insider, it would make it a whole lot easier," Ray agreed, "Someone better get in contact with Ray Marshall and get that information. Then we'll figure out where they're likely to strike, split up and work against them from all three locations."

Gary picked up the sat phone and dialed the number written on the paper.

"White House switchboard, how may I direct your call?" the woman asked.

"This is Gary Olsen and I'm trying to reach Ray Marshall, the Secretary for Homeland Security," Gary explained.

"One moment please, I'll connect your call," the operator said.

"Ray Marshall," Ray answered.

"Gary Olsen," Gary announced, "How's the new job?"

"Busy, Gary," Marshall said, "We seem to be one step behind these guys at every turn."

“That’s why I’m calling Ray,” Gary explained, “We’re having this skull session out here in California and we think we may be able to help if we know exactly which targets have been hit in chronological order. We have a little experience at this you know.”

“I’d fax you the information but the phones are down Gary,” Marshall offered.

“No problem, we have a computer hooked up to a sat phone Ray,” Gary said, “Fax the information to 619-555-1212.”

“I get it sent within the next hour,” Marshall replied.

“Talk to you later, Ray,” Gary said, “Do you need to know what we’re going to be doing or should we just do it?”

“Gary, you may have more people to deal with than you have personnel,” Ray responded. “Let us know when you need help.”

“And he just picks up the phone and calls the White House, for crying out loud,” Ron said. “Hi Ray, how’s the new job? Talk about sleeping with the enemy! Why didn’t you invite the President out for more leftovers?”

“I thought the leftovers were gone, or I would have,” Gary laughed.

“We have a fax coming in on the sat phone,” Derek announced.

“That was quick,” Gary smiled, “Must have been expecting the call.”

With the information provided by DHS, they were able to map the attacks. It appeared that Ray Marshall was right, there were too many groups operating within the country for them to take them all on. They picked the groups they would try and take out, reduced the whole thing to writing and called Marshall back. Gary explained what the Freedom Riders were going to do and suggested that DHS get the Army or someone to deal with the groups they couldn’t handle. The three of them would stay at the Village and coordinate all of the group’s activities by Ham radio. Marshall wanted to know how the Army would be able to identify the Freedom Riders so that they could leave them alone.

“We’ll be the ones with the Interceptor vests with the Gadsden flag on the back.” Gary had told the Secretary.

“Probably just painting on a bulls eye for them to shoot at,” Ron grumbled.

“If anyone shoots at us,” Gary replied tersely, “We’ll shoot back.”

One of the retired vet’s wife did silk screening as a hobby and she agreed to make up



the screen and apply the flag pattern to the vests using a fluorescent yellow paint. She had plenty of help and was cranking out the imprinted vests in no time. While they waited for the vests to be completed, they finalized their plans. Gary, Ron and Clarence would coordinate the operations of the three groups with DHS and except for a small detachment to provide security, everyone would be on the road; hunting season was about to open.

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The terrorists were divided up into 3 and 4 person teams that typically tried to pass themselves off as Hispanic tourists. They had invested in motor homes and were 'vacationers', caught away from home by the tragic events. Each team had an AOR where they were tasked with attacking electric substations, power lines, generating facilities and pipelines. If the area also included a principal, exposed, water supply they also had contaminants to foul the water. It didn't matter that the contaminants weren't of sufficient concentration or in sufficient quantity to kill millions because a contaminated water source was nevertheless unusable.

"It looks to me like there's a pattern in how these terrorists are moving around," Ron said, "Look here guys, most of these attacks are in the area of some attraction of some sort."

"What do you mean Ron?" Clarence asked, "What attractions?"

"Tourist traps Clarence," Ron explained, "All of those historic sites and natural wonders that folks try to capitalize on to get money into their communities. In this area here," he said pointing to a map, "The attacks pretty much follow the same route Linda and the kids and I took when we were in vacation in that area a few years ago."

"Sounds like they've been reading a page out of our book," Gary observed.

"Why not Gar-Bear, it worked for us," Ron replied.

"Do we have anyone in the area?" Gary asked.

"That would be Bill and his bunch," Clarence said looking at the resident's assignments.

"What did they hit last Ron?" Gary asked.

"An electrical substation, right here," Ron replied again pointing at the map.

"Where did Linda and you go after you were there?" Gary probed.

"Come on partner, it can't be that simple," Ron protested.

"How did Linda and you pick where you went Ron?" Gary wanted to know.

“Uh, a guidebook from AAA,” Ron replied.

It really was just that simple. The terrorists had identified the targets that they wanted to hit and had come up with the idea of masquerading as Hispanic tourists. The easiest source of cover attractions in their AOR's had been travel guides. So, they planned their attacks based on recommendations in the guidebooks of attractions to visit. When there wasn't an attraction in the immediate area of their next attack, they simply made the necessary detour along the way. Gary, Ron and Clarence didn't have a complete set of AAA guidebooks; probably only AAA had them in their regional offices. A sat call later, Ray Marshall had people all over the country breaking into AAA offices and retrieving guidebooks. He faxed the geezers the pages they wanted and began distributing the other books to the military. Having a friend in camp was beginning to pay off.

Ray and Ryan only really had about 20 people, including themselves, after they left behind a few men to guard Benton Village. That gave them 5 4-man teams. The redhead would sit this one out and supplement the same guard force. Ron contacted Ray by sat phone and filled him in on their discovery. He also passed along 5 areas and the probable itineraries to his northern ally. Since Ray Marshall was gone and John Robins and his wife had moved to Freedom Village, the folks at the Mt. Weather Resort were hard pressed to come up with anything more than a 3-man team. Marshall must have sensed it would be a problem for them because he sent along a retired Gunnery Sergeant he knew to 'advise' the 3 men at the resort. Jim advised Freedom Village that they could mount one 4-man team and were given a travel guide itinerary for nearby Virginia.

“I love it when a plan comes together,” Ron smiled.

“What plan Ronald?” Gary asked. “We don't have a plan. What we have is a lucky break and a bunch of stupid terrorists. We never followed a set plan when we did our raids that I can remember.”

“But Gary, they probably have a plan B,” Clarence pointed out.

“Like we did?” Gary laughed. “My memory may be poor, but it seems to me that when a plan didn't work out, we usually had to start over. I don't want to sit around this environmental nightmare and let everyone else have all the fun. I want to ride!”

“Then go saddle up Salina and ride, you old goat,” Ron said, “We're too old to go looking for trouble.”

“But I'd be ok to fight if trouble came looking for us, I suppose?” Gary snarled.

“That's different Gar-Bear and you know it,” Ron replied. “Beside if you're here in the Village, you'd have someone to carry your rifle for you.”

“Ah, bull Ron,” Gary said, “We need to go over to Palm Springs and help those folks

protect that turbine farm, or something. I can ride passenger in a dune buggy, Clarence can drive and you can be up top.”

“Hey, I want to be up top,” Clarence protested.

“Ok Clarence, Ron’s a maniac behind a wheel, but if that’s what it takes to get some action, I’ll ride with my eyes closed,” Gary offered.

“You’d better wear a blindfold after a crack like that Gar-Bear,” Ron smiled, “Ok we’ll go to Palm Springs and protect the wind turbines. Although for the life of me, I can’t imagine anyone knocking down 3,000 wind turbines.”

Gary, be careful what you wish for, God has a sense of humor and he might just give you what you want, again. And just where in the hell did getting what you wanted ever get you? Getting what you wanted caused that rapid onset of the diabetic neuropathy; remember? Anyway the three old guys filled up the 33-gallon beer keg fuel tank, loaded the Mk-19 for Gary and the Ma-Deuce for Clarence and headed to Palm Springs, leaving a retired SM in charge of the Village. It was more downhill than uphill and they arrived in the Coachella Valley in a couple of hours.

It didn’t appear that anyone was bothering the turbines, but Gary insisted that they park on a hill and keep watch on the turbines. Around dark, Ron pointed out that God must have lost his sense of humor and suggested that they return to the Village. Gary pointed out that they hadn’t driven for 2 hours just to give up after ‘a few minutes’ and insisted that they spend the night. They had their night vision equipment and he pointed out that they were right above I-10. If anyone was going to attack the turbines, he insisted, they’d ‘have to use I-10’.

Rather than argue, Ron caved in. Clarence didn’t care one way or the other; he had the best view in town. They ended up taking turns dozing and watching. Around 3am, Gary felt a sharp kick from Clarence. He started to say something and then remembered where they were and why they were there. He looked at Clarence and Clarence pointed toward the wind farm. Gary rubbed the sleep out of his eyes and pulled up the binoculars to take a look. The sight of a parked Winnebago motor home and four Hispanic looking guys dismounting the vehicle greeted his eyes. “What would 4 Mexicans be doing in a wind park at 3am,” he wondered. Gary nudged Ron and then shushed him when he snapped awake. Gary pointed to the Winnebago and the 4 men. Ron started up the vehicle and eased it down the hill across I-10 and about 500-yards from the Winnebago.

### Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 20 – Chili Peppers

After they parked, Gary couldn't stand it anymore and asked Ron for his opinion. "Ron, what would 4 Mexicans be doing in a wind park at 3am?"

"They're probably looking for chili peppers, idiot! How the hell would I know what 4 Mexicans would be doing in a wind park at 3am?"

"Maybe they're looking for arrowheads, Gary," Clarence whispered.

"Shut up and cock that machine gun Clarence," Gary whispered back. "Arrowheads? Sheesh!"

Ron took the lead and shouted, "Alto!"

They four men looked up and spotted the dune buggy but acted like Ron was speaking a foreign language. Gary cocked the Mk-19 and the men slowly raised their hands. In his best Spanish, Ron called out, "Habla Inglesa?" The four men looked bewildered and Ron knew that so far the 3 words of Spanish he'd managed to get out were close enough to the real thing that they should have been able to understand him. He was about to try one more time when one of the men asked, with a British accent, "Why are you pointing firearms at us gentlemen?"

"US Marshals," Ron quickly replied, hoping he'd remembered to bring his badge. "Let me see some identification."

"Let me see yours, Marshal," the same man spoke.

Ron had about enough of this and he fumbled for his ID case, which he finally remembered was in his shirt pocket. He grabbed the MP5/10SD6 (10mm) dismounted and cocked the submachine gun. He held up his badge and one of the men made a quick move as if he was going for a gun. The little submachine gun spat out a 3-round burst and the unfortunate man folded up like an accordion. Clarence added emphasis to Ron's action by firing a short burst over the three men's heads. The man had been reaching for his wallet, but his 3 companions also quickly reached and it wasn't for any wallets. Clarence cut them down with a slightly longer burst aimed 3 feet lower.

"Crap partner, we might never know who they are now," Ron grouched and approached the men.

One of them wasn't fully expired and his last words were "Allahu akbar kabeeran wal hamdulillahi katheeran wa subhaanallahi bukratan wa a seelaa." (translation: Allah is the Greatest, very great. Praise be to Allah, again and again.)

"Never mind, that sounded like Arabic," Ron said, "Guys I think we just shot us a bunch or ragheads."

“Ok, we can go home now,” Gary said.

“Go home?” Ron said, “Are you out of your mind? These guys were terrorists!”

“I know, Ron,” Gary replied, “But who is going to believe us?”

“I’m going to check out that RV,” Ron said.

About 10 minutes later, Ron emerged from the Winnebago with a look of triumph on his face. He had a AAA travel guide in his hand,

“Fire up that 10-meter radio and let Freedom Village know that the terrorists may be disguised as Mexicans and may be driving RV’s,” he insisted, throwing Gary the open travel guide.

The travel guide was open to a page that showed an itinerary. It had circles around several communities, including Palm Springs, and some of the circles had an “X” through them. Gary thought he recognized some of the names as targets that had been hit. The last city with an “X” had been hit just the day before, according to the update from DHS that they’d seen before they left. Gary fired up the 10-meter radio and filled in the SM at the Village. The 3 of them then loaded the bodies onto the Winnebago and Ron set off eastbound driving the RV. Clarence crawled into the driver’s seat of the dune buggy and they trailed along behind.

Freedom Village...

When they arrived, there was one of those big Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk’s sitting there, with a couple of Marines guarding the chopper. They parked the Winnebago and the dune buggy and went into the security office.

“Been doing a little hunting of your own?” the Marine Captain asked.

“Ron and Clarence had all the fun,” Gary grouched, “I didn’t even get to shoot the Mk-19.”

“Where are the bodies?” the Captain asked. “Did you leave them or bring them back with you?”

“The ragheads bodies are in the Winnebago,” Ron announced proudly.

“We’ll search the Winnebago and then you can have it,” the Captain said. “We’ll haul those bodies back to Yuma for identification. You didn’t shoot them up beyond recognition, I hope.”

The three geezers repeated what they’d learned, this time giving the full version. The

Captain looked at the travel guide with interest and pointed out something to the guys that they'd missed, San Clemente was circled. San Clemente was just 10 miles north of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station. Although the plant was well guarded by a contingent of Marines from Camp Pendleton, had the terrorist been able to gain access to the plant, it would have been a disaster. And SONGS generated a substantial portion of the energy for southern California and even taking out the transmission lines would have had a significant effect on the electrical grid.

"Crap, if I'd known that they were going to give us the Winnebago, I would have put plastic down," Ron belly ached.

The Marines put the 4 corpses in body bags and loaded them aboard the Blackhawk. After thoroughly searching the RV they fired up the chopper and left. Gary was tired and he'd missed his evening meds, so he took his pills and insulin and went to bed. Ron and Clarence weren't in much better shape, although they had remembered to take their meds with them to Palm Springs. They took their pills and called it a night, too. Is it correct to say they called it a night if they went to bed at 9am?

Washington...

"How's it looking Ray?" Santorum asked.

"The old guys were pretty much on the money about everything, Mr. President," Marshall replied. "We've caught or killed several of the terrorist teams. Fortunately with the electricity down, we've managed to keep this information off the news. The water supplies were contaminated, but we can deal with that. There haven't been many additional deaths attributed to the attacks either. Apparently people who were dependent upon electric power for medical equipment had generators. Oh, Gary, Ron and Clarence went over to Palm Springs on their own and took out a terrorist team."

"You don't say," Santorum chuckled. "Just couldn't sit still and let the younger folks handle the problem?"

"I suspect the Gary just wanted an excuse to shoot that Mk-19," Marshall replied, "But Ron shot one of the men and Clarence gunned down the other 3 with a Ma-Deuce."

"How much longer until we've wrapped this problem up Ray?" Santorum asked.

"Two or three weeks, Mr. President," Ray replied, "They're spread out all over the country. But since we know where they're likely to strike, it's proving to be easier than we first thought it would be."

"Our boys got people out all over the country?" Santorum asked.

"They have a 4-man team working in Virginia, Ray Benton has 5 4-man teams working the northern area around Wyoming and Colorado and Freedom Village put out several

teams to cover Arizona, Nevada and southern California,” Marshall explained.

“Why did we even bother to send out our people?” Santorum asked. “Those old guys probably would have cleaned up the whole mess themselves, if we’d have just let them run loose for a while. Keep me informed Ray, we’ve got to get the power back up and everything repaired.”

“Yes Sir, Mr. President,” Marshall acknowledged.

Freedom Village...

“I’ve got to quit staying up nights,” Gary said, “Gets my system all out of whack.”

“Don’t look at me Gar-Bear, I was all in favor of coming home,” Ron shrugged, “But no, you wanted to stay up all night and play hero.”

“That’s a pretty nice machine gun,” Clarence observed, “I wonder how it would do on rabbits?”

“I’m sure it would kill them Clarence, and you wouldn’t have to worry about cleaning them either,” Ron said, “Assuming you could even find anything after you shot the rabbit.”

“That’s ok Ron,” Clarence responded, “Rabbits don’t taste like chicken anyway.”

“I guess we’ve saved the world again, so we don’t need to go out anymore,” Gary announced.

“What makes you say that, partner?” Ron asked, “Surely you don’t believe that there were only 4 terrorists, do you?”

“Not at all, but we got our 4 and besides I didn’t even get to shoot the Mk-19,” Gary lamented. “I don’t particularly like rabbit either; maybe I could use the Mk-19 to hunt rabbits when Clarence goes rabbit hunting with that Ma-Deuce.”

It seemed obvious that the outing had broken the tension that the terrorist attacks had caused because the three old geezers were back to their clowning around. Their happening across the 4 terrorists in Palm Springs was a fluke that defied the odds. And had they actually had an opportunity to question the 4 men and succeeded in getting them to talk, they might have learned that the target was the control station, not the turbines. Ron did have a way about him that just seemed to get to folks to pour out their souls. Their responsibilities resolved into collecting information from the various teams and passing it along to Ray Marshall or one of his representatives.

Unfortunately, *the people’s right to know* resulted in the terrorists abandoning their plans before ¼ of the groups could be captured or killed. The major broadcasters had learned

from their earlier experiences and had standby power readily available. Apparently so did the satellite TV providers because a week into the emergency, TV was available and many radio stations were back on the air. Not that it made much sense; lots of people had battery-operated radios, but how many had battery operated TV's? And, it hadn't been the terrorists who had shut down the phone system, rather the government. However, as soon as it became apparent that the terrorists weren't using the phones and Internet to communicate, the government authorized the phone companies to resume service.

Faced with certain capture, the terrorists simply blended back into the American population to wait for the Americans to become complacent once more. That was one of the beauties of opposing the Americans. As soon as the danger had passed and order been restored, major portions of the population seemed to forget all about the danger. Some might take precautions, such as acquiring a backup generator or putting up a few extra cans of beans or something, but as a whole the people resumed as normal of a life as the situation would permit. The vow to not kowtow to terrorists was a double edged sword. When the attacks abruptly stopped and everyone started coming up empty, the teams returned to Benton Village, Freedom Village and the Mt. Weather Resort.

Washington...

"Did we get all of them or did they just stop?" Santorum asked Ray Marshall.

"I think that they probably stopped when the news broke, Mr. President," Marshall replied. "But the FBI is trying to track down as many of them as they can."

"A fat lot of good that's going to do," Santorum noted, "They probably came in across the borders and have well established identities that we've never give a second glance at. And, we can't go around harassing people just because they appear to be of Middle Eastern extraction. And if we try to maintain a high alert status, the cost becomes prohibitive, not to mention that public begins to object to the inconvenience that that security causes."

"Mr. President, it will probably always be like that," Marshall observed, "One of the greatest tools we could have would be a National Identity Card, but the mere mention of such a system sets off a majority of the population, including organizations like the ACLU. The funny part of it is that many of the people who oppose the card already are in the system. All states now require a fingerprint and anyone who was in the service or had a security clearance or was ever arrested is in the system."

"Ben Franklin said *A people who will sacrifice freedom for safety are worthy of neither*," Santorum reminded Marshall.

"Ben Franklin didn't live in New York City on September 11, 2001," Marshall pointed out.



### Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 21 – NIDC Scandal

“That’s true,” Santorum agreed, “But Americans have an irrational fear of something like a National ID Card. Some people object to it on religious grounds, citing Biblical passages about the Mark of the Beast; others feel that it is simply too intrusive. After 9/11 that guy from Oracle, Larry Ellison came out in favor of them, but it didn’t go anywhere. Are you recommending that we institute a National ID Card system, Ray?”

“Not at all Mr. President,” Marshall replied. “Although you do realize that President Clinton signed legislation in 1996 which created the National ID Card, don’t you? No, if Americans would rather be dead than safe, who am I to suggest otherwise?”

Both men were right. The law had been on the books since 1996. But Americans were afraid of a little plastic card. Most people accepted the fact that you had to show your driver’s license or some form of acceptable identification to any police office that asked you to show your ID, but the idea that you would be required to carry a card that absolutely identified you and could interface with a database where all relevant information concerning you identity, criminal record, and could be used by the states as a substitute driver’s license and as your Social Card by the feds, was just going too far...

Freedom Village...

Interestingly the three old geezers weren’t afraid of the concept of a National ID. They’d be harder to counterfeit, but nothing was foolproof. All you had to do was get a writer/scanner and scan a few real cards to discern the contents of the cards. Then, you could probably go on the Internet and find a program written by some hacker that allowed you to program the cards. It wasn’t a big deal to them either way. The government already knew everything there was to know about you, so what was the big deal if they put it all into a single database?

It was like the argument about firearms registration, which said that registration was the first step in a process of seizing all firearms, yeah, if you were stupid enough not to hide your guns. Besides a lot of guns traded hands from owner to owner and law or not, they probably wouldn’t get registered and how likely was it for the seller to rush to the authorities to report the sale? Never happen. But the idea of letting your driver’s license carry the legend ‘National Identity Card’ just set people off.

Tehran, Iran...

Abdullah bin Laden hadn’t expected the Americans to tumble to his ruse quite as fast as they did, but he had a plan B and a plan C, if it came to that. Plan B called for his people to lay low until the heat was off. Then they would begin a campaign of killing select Americans. Since they had demonstrated that they could pass for Hispanics, they were going to start killing those black Americans and let the Hispanics take the blame. It was, in fact the very race war that Condi Rice had warned the President of. It would take the form of an escalating gang war and hopefully spill over and involve the remainder of the

Americans...

Freedom Village...

Ray Marshall called and asked the guys to do him a favor. He had proposed a National ID Card system to President Santorum, but had met with a less than enthusiastic reception. He was wondering if the guys were willing to be his first guinea pigs in an experiment of the proposed system. He explained that the card could be coded to include biometric data, their driver's licenses or state ID card and a credit or ATM card. The biometric data would include a full set of fingerprints, 15 DNA markers and an iris scan. They immediately agreed, but insisted on a demonstration of how the data storage system worked. Marshall gave them full Internet access to the database set up for the test. Marshall had commented that if the test were a success, the database would be expanded and used as the primary database if the President could be persuaded to implement the old law.

One of the vets who was a member of Freedom Village's population had retired as a Tech Sergeant from the Air Force. He might have gone farther in the Air Force, but he kept getting in trouble over his hobby, computer hacking. Little did he realize that his hobby had been the deciding factor in the three old geezers, who now preferred to refer to themselves as 'classics', in accepting his application for membership. He was a skilled MIS type and his part time job was to keep the Village's computer network up and running. He now gained a new responsibility and it had all to do with his hobby and his abilities. Marshall had provided 'front-door' access to the database. The Sergeant not only got into the system's inner workings, he installed a back door as he erased his tracks on the way out.

"I'll go along with this National ID Card thing Gar-Bear on one condition," Ron announced.

"What condition is that partner?" Gary asked.

"I think that we're being singled out here," Ron explained. "I don't know why you're so suddenly trusting of a politician. But I do know we should have a complete set of equipment so we can scan those ID cards and interface with the system. You know what I mean, one of those electronic fingerprint scanners and an iris scanner and like that."

"I don't see a problem with that, my friend," Gary responded, "I was sort of thinking along the same lines myself. Besides, for this system of Ray's to work they have to embed something in the data on those cards that distinguishes the real cards from counterfeits. We'll probably have to analyze dozens of cards to find out what that is."

"If that's the case, Gary," Clarence suggested, "Why don't we volunteer the entire Village population for cards. That will give you an excuse to ask Ray for all of that equipment Ron wants."

“Real cool Clarence,” Ron said, “You’re going to have the entire Freedom Riders organization in their database. Why don’t we just surrender now and save them the trouble of arresting us later?”

“Now just hold on a minute there Ronald,” Gary said, “I sort of like that. We should have them include everyone from the Resort and Benton Village. I have an idea...”

The website was the source of Gary’s idea. Unfortunately, the company was in the United Kingdom, but it was most revealing about the technology that Ray Marshall was likely to employ. If they could figure out what device Ray intended to employ to keep the cards from being counterfeited, they were home free. They could generate all kinds of fake ID’s and use the backdoor to implant the information in the database. But, they could only do that if they had enough of the smartcards to analyze. The access to the database and Ray’s gimmick would probably be the only things to keep the Mexicans from duplicating the cards and flooding the country with fake cards, anyway.

Gary contacted Ray and suggested that his test would be far more revealing if the government provided the test cards to all the residents of the three communities. At first, Ray was reluctant, he hadn’t planned on that large of a test, but Gary explained all the advantages a larger test population would provide and won Ray over. Ray admitted to Gary that he was doing the whole test on a shoestring budget, diverting funds from various security projects that he didn’t name, to pay for the test. But, when Gary offered to cover the cost of all of the cards and equipment for the residents of the three communities and for equipment so that they could conduct their own internal testing, Ray was persuaded.

The Department of Homeland Security dispatched a mobile laboratory/programming van to the Resort, then to Benton Village and finally to Freedom Village. Lab technicians took swabs from their mouths and identified the DNA markers. A high-resolution digital camera was used to record the iris data and their fingerprints were taken using the latest digital technology. This information, together with information taken from the questionnaires they all filled out, was programmed into the highly secure, encrypted smartcards and the data was also entered into the national database.

An arrangement with West Virginia, Wyoming and California allowed the cards to serve as their drivers’ licenses. A similar arrangement with MasterCard, Visa and American Express allowed the cards to also serve as credit/atm cards. During the process of setting up the ID’s some of the blank cards went missing, but the government types assumed that they had miscounted, they were only missing 9 cards. The Air Force Sergeant was given the data scanned from each of the completed cards and he began his treasure hunt to find that one thing on the cards that made each card unique and allegedly unsusceptible to counterfeiting.

Meanwhile, Gary, Ron and Clarence set about concerning themselves with the terrorists who had escaped the net that had been set to catch them. They didn’t know if the guy

behind the whole thing had a plan B or C, but in his position, they would have. Wasn't it a shame that they didn't know about Condi's remarks to the President? They also made a trip to Blythe to see if the smartcards actually worked. Seemingly, against all odds, the cards did in fact work, at least at Carl's Jr where they stopped for lunch. Satisfied that the cards worked, they returned to the Village to see what the Sarge had come up with.

Sarge had discovered that each iris scan contained a spot somewhere around the iris that didn't belong. He had tracked the image to a jpeg file that contained some data stored using 512-bit encryption. The spot was barely visible because it appeared to be a text file of some sort and the color of the text was about the same color as the background where it sat. He had several computers working to decrypt the jpeg file, but suggested that with 512-bit encryption, it would take a while. He pointed out that his discovery of the image had been more of an accident than by design. Something just didn't look right about the iris scan displayed on the front of his card and when he'd examined it closely, he discovered the spot. He speculated that the jpeg file and the iris scan were combined early on to form the basis for the photo of the iris on the front of the card.

Washington...

"Anyway, I took it upon myself to run a test of the National ID Card, to see if it was a viable idea," Marshall explained to President Santorum.

"Who did you get to be your guinea pigs?" Santorum asked, "Not that I approved, but I suppose we should test the system."

"We have all of the residents of the Mt. Weather Resort, Benton Village and Freedom Village using the cards, Mr. President," Marshall replied.

"Do you think that's wise, Ray?" Santorum asked. "Those guys will probably figure out how to counterfeit the cards and make themselves a bunch of phony ID's."

"I think that we have a foolproof scheme, Mr. President," Ray replied, "But the only way to be sure is to let them take their best shot at trying to break it. Besides, every card is compared to the database and a phony would kick out."

Freedom Village...

"Got it," Sarge announced. "That spot is the encrypted card number. So, all we have to do is create an encrypted jpeg file that contains the card number. I didn't figure it would be too complicated, otherwise the government would have a nightmare on their hands trying to uniquely protect each card."

"So we can make up fake NIDC's?" Gary asked.

"Sure can, Gary, what would you like me to start with?" Sarge asked.

“Make us cards that match these ID’s,” Gary said, handing Sarge each of their three sets of phony law enforcement credentials.

“Are these real?” Sarge asked.

“No, but they’re good about one layer deep in the computer records,” Gary replied. “By adding them to the NISC database, that becomes 2 layers deep.”

“How am I going to get the pictures and such on the front of the cards?’ Sarge asked.

“I have no idea,” Gary replied, “But I imagine that it’s a high-resolution version of those gadgets some of the stores like Costco and Sam’s Club use to put your picture on the back of your card.”

Within a day, Sarge had ID’s made up for Gary. He had decided to make 5 ID’s for Gary including a duplicate counterfeit of his real ID and a duplicate counterfeit of the real ID with the jpeg file from the original ID. He explained to Gary that DHS probably expected them to try and counterfeit the ID’s and the fake ID with the original jpeg file would cause a card number mismatch and be detected as a fake.

Gary, he suggested should use just the two fakes of the original ID and try them on the DHS system. DHS would realize that they had tried to produce a fake ID, but would assume that they had failed and the encrypted jpeg file worked. The real test would be using the second fake ID that was totally counterfeit. If it passed, the Villagers would have one up on DHS and DHS would think they had one up on the Villagers.

## Preparations III – the Freedom Riders – Chapter 22 – Real Freedom

Gary traveled to Washington with Ron and Clarence, purportedly to check on the Resort in West Virginia. While they were there, they got a hold of Ray and he invited them to his office. Admission to the building could be gained by use of the NIDC. Gary tried the card with mismatched numbers and was immediately stopped by the security guard who seized the counterfeit card. The guard called Ray to come vouch for the three men and Ray told Gary that the counterfeit card just wasn't good enough. Gary, apparently chagrined, swiped the second counterfeit card and it passed. He confessed that they had tried to counterfeit the cards, but obviously their counterfeits were no good. He never let on that the second card was also a counterfeit. Ray admitted to Gary that he had expected that they would try and duplicate the cards but they should now realize that it was impossible.

"We came pretty close Ray," Gary said. "But, that jpeg encryption was a bitch. Are you open to some suggestions?"

"Of course, what do you recommend?" Ray asked.

"That jpeg file sticks out like a sore thumb, pal," Gary commented, "You need to just include whatever is inside the file as part of the card data. And, it probably wouldn't hurt to encrypt the entire dataset at a higher level than 128 bits, say 512-bit encryption."

"Anything else?" Ray asked, taking notes.

"That spot on the iris scan was easy enough to spot," Gary explained. "You'll never hide it the way you're doing it. If it were I, I'd hide that spot in the pupil as black on black."

"That's a good suggestion," Ray agreed, "We'll look into it. And we'll probably implement your other suggestion too, although we might raise the encryption level to 1024 or 2048 on the card."

"Gee Ray, won't that slow the system down too much?" Gary asked, trying to dissuade Marshall.

"With the computers I intend to use if the President will allow me to implement the NIDC's," Marshall replied, "The encryption will be virtually transparent."

"I see," Gary acknowledged.

"We'll be issuing you new cards if the system goes online," Ray explained. "I really want to thank you guys for testing the cards and the system. Both tests."

The three old geezers left to return to the Resort. On the way, Ron was all over Gary, haranguing him over the suggestions that Gary had made to Ray.

“Ronald, they expected us to try and counterfeit those cards,” Gay insisted. “I had to wear my white hat in there. Besides, pointing out the obvious flaws in the system didn’t hurt us one bit.”

“But what if they go to a higher level of encryption?” Clarence asked, “Won’t that make the cards impossible to duplicate?”

“Clarence, we have over 200 computers at the Village,” Gary pointed out. “We’ll just get Sarge to write us a distributed computing application and have our own super computer breaking the encryption scheme.”

“If they do implement the system, how are they going to manage issuing cards to all the people in the country?” Clarence asked.

“Well,” Gary said, “Let me polish my crystal ball here and I’ll hazard a guess. There are 96 FEMA offices around the country. Those offices are tied into the military’s new, secure Internet system that they were forced to develop when the regular Internet got swamped.”

“I never heard anything about that,” Ron said.

“It’s called the Tactical Internet and doesn’t interface with the regular net,” Gary explained.

“Real secure, huh?” Ron countered.

“Ron, a system is only as secure as the people who operate it,” Gary commented. “Besides I suspect that it is possible to access the tactical net either by telephone or military radio. We’ll just leave that up to Sarge and Damon.”

“How did we get off on this tangent?” Clarence asked. “I thought we were talking about the NIDC’s.”

“We were, pal,” Gary agreed. “My whole point is that the real security in the system lies in the fact that the primary database is part of an essentially closed system. Hell, if we can counterfeit those cards, others probably can. It won’t do them any good, however, unless they can access the closed system and that means accessing the tactical Internet.”

Washington...

“They did try to counterfeit the ID Cards Mr. President, but they failed,” Marshall explained. “So, I am now formally recommending that we adopt the NIDC System, with some modifications that Gary Olsen recommended.”

“Won’t using his recommendations just create a vulnerability?” Santorum asked.

“Actually, sir, his recommendations would make the system more secure,” Marshall explained.

“I am really reluctant to implement the NIDC System Ray,” President Santorum replied, “But if that’s what it’s going to take to get terrorism in check, I’ll ask Congress for an appropriation to bring the system online.”

The US was an interesting place in late 2013 and early 2014. After much debate, Congress approved the implementation of the NIDC System. Ray Marshall put in a new, dedicated computer system to handle the high volume of transactions that he expected the system to receive. His analysts gave their best estimates of the transaction volume and he multiplied those estimates by a factor of 20. Contracts were let for the new cards and equipment. State Legislatures were forced into accepting the system by the threat of losing all of their federal funding. Even a good administration and Congress could get heavy handed when they were on a mission. Just as predicted, FEMA was in charge of the project and they were operating the issuance of cards through their 96 regional centers. Marshall sent all of the original participants in the ‘feasibility study’ replacement cards.

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“How are you coming with decrypting those new cards, Sarge?” Gary asked.

“Not a problem, guys, “We broke their code in a few days. However, we haven’t been able to get into the Tactical Internet yet. They obviously don’t have telephone access to the system. Damon is working with some of those military radios we have to try and find the frequency they’re using. However, they’re probably frequency hopping, so until we can get in synch with their system, we’re out of the loop. Besides, I don’t see the point to this whole endeavor.”

“Trust us on this one Sarge,” Ron replied, “There will come a day when it will be perfectly clear.”

Eventually, Damon did manage to hook into the Tactical Internet and Sarge scrambled to register their node, using every hacking trick he knew and a couple he had to invent. With the access to the national database in place, they began to add records to that database, 3 additional records for every resident of the three locations. Sarge also hacked state record databases to get the identities they needed. With the database compromised to suit their needs, the new, counterfeit NIDC’s were issued to the residents. And, while Sarge was at it, he coded the records to indicate that each of the three false ID’s belonged to a federal Law Enforcement Officer. Now, all of the vets were a US Marshal, a member of the FBI or the Secret Service, depending upon which NIDC they used. And, they had the counterfeit badges and LEO ID’s to back it up.

As one might imagine, there was a sizable protest by the public against the new system.



In the November 2014 elections, the Republicans lost several seats in the House and Senate, barely retaining their majority in both houses of Congress. The President's popularity dipped significantly in the polls, but as the new system began to rout the terrorists, Santorum regained a portion of the popularity he'd lost. Opponents of the system were absolutely correct in their assessment of the NIDC System; it was very intrusive. On the other hand, the arrests of several thousand foreigners in the US on expired VISA's or without papers did not go unnoticed.

In an effort to combat some of the criticism his administration was taking, Santorum proposed an amnesty program for illegal aliens, once their identity could be firmly established through communications with their country of origin. The government of Mexico had to be bought off at a tremendous price; they had far too much identification to process. Other South American countries were less than cooperative, too; it seemed that a lot of their citizens had fled repression and they weren't about to help the people who had fled their countries. The US is a melting pot and it took a long time to get the population all properly identified.

But, such a system isn't much use with the porous borders that the US had with Mexico and Canada and steps had to be implemented to close those access routes. Despite having fences, night vision equipment and all of the modern technology, the US Border Patrol had been unable to stop the flow of illegals from Mexico. The border with Mexico was 3,141km long and the border with Canada was 8,893km long including 2,477km with Alaska. As far back as post 9/11, problems had arisen with the US-Canadian border. US agents were harassing young Canadian women attempting to enter the US and Canada retaliated by barring entry to any American with so much as a misdemeanor conviction on his or her record. Mexico claimed to be cooperating with the US but their efforts, for years, had consisted of attempting to create more jobs in Mexico, a less than successful program.

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*Faced with continuing problems with illegal aliens, the CNN announcer reported, The Senate passed the House measure intended to seal the US borders by a margin of a single vote. President Santorum has indicated that he would 'reluctantly' sign the measure into law. For those in our audience unfamiliar with the proposal, the Congress has mandated that a high voltage electrified fence, similar to those currently used in some US prisons, be installed to cordon off the US-Canadian and US-Mexican borders.*

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"I tell you Ron, once they get that electrical 'Berlin Wall' installed," Gary offered, "They'll have us all locked in."

"I wouldn't worry about it Gar-Bear, it will take years to build that electric fence," Ron tried to calm Gary.

“That’s a lot of bull Ron,” Gary retorted, “They get the US Army Corps of Engineers and a bunch of civilian contractors involved and they’ll have the whole thing in up in no time. It’s not the electric fences that take the time to install, partner, it’s the protective fences that slow up things.”

“My, my,” Clarence remarked, “Who would have ever thought that it would come to this in the United States of America?”

“Won’t the governments of Mexico and Canada object?” Derek asked.

“The fences are going to be built on US soil, son,” Gary replied, “They can object all they want; it won’t do them any good. I was all in favor of the NIDC System, but this is going just too far. Anyway, we’d better get all resident’s to apply for Passports immediately. Who knows how far they’re going to take this thing? And, get Passports for all of the identities, the real and the fake. At least they streamlined the Passport system with the NIDC System, so getting a Passport is a snap.”

For its prowess, the NICD System lacked the most obvious of internal controls, specifically a fingerprint/DNA/iris/photograph comparison system. DHS was overly confident in the system once the boys from California had failed to duplicate the cards and such a comparison system would have more than doubled the cost of the system. Getting a Passport was a simple matter of appearing at a federal office and swiping your NIDC. A couple of weeks later, a Passport arrived in the mail. To handle the huge volume of people applying for the NIDC’s FEMA had opened several satellite offices. Within a month, everyone had 4 Passports.

“We’re too old to be out their raising hell, my friends,” Gary suggested, “But we have a younger generation to take our places. I think that it is about time to put FEMA in its place.”

“Ray Marshall is going to love that, partner,” Ron laughed, “Him being our friend and in charge of DHS and all.”

“You misunderstand Ronald McDonald,” Gary explained, “We aren’t going to attack with bullets and guns; we’re going to use computers. Don’t you remember all that talk back in 2004 how the Muslims were going to bring everything down around our ears using computers? If it’s good enough for that bunch of terrorists, it’s good enough for this bunch of terrorists.”

“I resent the hell out of that remark, Gar-Bear,” Ron snapped. “Where the hell do you get off calling the Freedom Riders a bunch of terrorists?”

“Yeah, Gary, we’re patriots and freedom fighters, not terrorists,” Clarence added. “And I don’t want to hear any quotes from Shakespeare about roses or anything.”

“Whatever Clarence,” Gary said, “All I know is that a lot of the things we’ve done over the past few years weren’t that much different from what those terrorists tried to do. So you can count out my participation in any more acts of violence. We can attack the computers systems or we can just sit around and do nothing. Either way, as far as I’m concerned, that’s the end of this story.”

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